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# EGYPT SINCE CROMER

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# EGYPT SINCE CROMER

BY

LORD LLOYD

VOLUME II

“He that observeth the wind shall not sow ;  
and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.”  
ECCLESIASTES xi. 4

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## PREFACE

I HAVE already in the Preface to the first volume of this book expressed my grateful thanks for the valuable assistance I have received in writing it. To the names there set down I must now add those of Mr. Arthur Wiggin, C.M.G., of H.M.'s Embassy at Washington, and of Mr. G. S. Antonius, formerly of the Palestine Educational Service. To Mr. Wiggin I was already under very considerable obligation for the untiring ability with which he carried out his duties when working with me in Cairo, and he has now increased my debt by refreshing and revising my memory of detailed facts. Mr. Antonius very kindly placed at my disposal his recollections of one of the most important incidents recorded in this volume, an incident in which he played a distinguished and successful part. I must also repeat here the acknowledgments I have already made in the first volume to the invaluable help which Mr. Forbes-Adam, C.S.I., gave me and which he has continued to give me in this volume.

Finally, I should like to express my deep appreciation of the help and courtesy received from Mr. Stephen Gaselee and the officials of the Foreign Office Library in the necessary work of investigation of official documents.

"My desire is", said Job, "that mine adversary



had written a book". I have sometimes felt that I had at last understood the full severity of that sentence. But, in my case, the burden of authorship has been greatly lightened by the expert knowledge and the kindness of all those who have helped me.

LLOYD

30 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1

*April 25, 1934*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

It is the land of Egypt that usually provides the English traveller with his first view of the East, and he must be dull indeed if the memory of that first view ever entirely fades. The short passage from ship to shore sets him suddenly face to face with the strange Oriental scene. The light that never was upon the land or sea of his home strikes now for the first time upon his eyes. The swift and colourful daylight sinks as if by magic to a softly luminous afterglow, and then to the unearthly peace and remoteness of the desert night. An imagination that is awake and receptive may catch from that vision an infection that will last a lifetime. Long afterwards, when the traveller has returned to the West, he will find the memory of its haunting beauty knocking persistently at the doors of his heart and mind.

Yet it has always seemed to me that it is not beauty alone that makes the appeal so enduring. There is some other quality that softens the strangeness and makes the Englishman feel a kinship, unanticipated but powerful, with a scene so foreign to his experience. It is a kinship which is difficult to explain—and I have often wondered how much of it is due to the Bible training that has so strongly influenced our childhood. Generation after generation, day after

day, we have read or listened to simple descriptions of a homely life, which has no counterpart in our experience, but yet by force of repetition has perhaps become part of our individual heritage. Until we travel into the East, that life is merely a convention—as unreal as the convention of the fairy-books. But in the East we find it going on, just as we heard of it, in every village. The characters and scenery of village life in India, in Egypt, in Arabia, are not strangers to us, but old friends. Two women will be grinding together still, and still the ox will be treading out the corn. The locusts still have no king, and still go forth by bands. The traveller may still pass by the vineyard of the slothful, the stone wall whereof is broken down: He may still hear the crackling of thorns under the pot. And still, alas! dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour. We know these sights and sounds: they are the companions of our youth magically restored to us: and by this link they demand, and obtain, from us a powerful, perhaps subconscious, sympathy. But still they are strangers. The processes of their thought are only learnt empirically, the strong rivers of their philosophical and religious life arise from sources that cannot be discovered by us; a deep gulf has parted the histories that have made them and us what we are.

In these two facts lie perhaps the deepest springs both of the benevolence we have always felt towards Eastern peoples, and of the misdirection that has often been given to that benevolence. Are kindred causes in some measure responsible for the fact that during the last ten years our ignorance of the East has been growing as our benevolence has been diminishing? It can hardly be denied that, whereas in the old days we relied upon knowledge and experience to

guide us, and increasing welfare to justify us, now we have discarded knowledge and a belief in the welfare of the masses in favour of a Western schoolman's theory—certainly not the least fallacious and superficial of the series. For what could be more dangerous than the principle of universal democracy to which all our theorists pay their daily lip service. They assert that "self-determination" is the sole criterion; that to be "free and independent" is to be happy. Are the Chinese peasants rejoicing in their new-found freedom and independence? May not the truth be that pure democracy is in no continent practically realisable, and that in most of the countries of the East it has proved itself to be directly incompatible with civilisation or the welfare of the world? And how is it that we find the same people who loudly acclaim the League of Nations, which, after all, can only develop in so far as it imposes checks upon absolute nationalism, urging us, as far as our Empire is concerned, to suppress such development by promoting nationalism at all costs?

How is this attitude, which has been so prevalent during the last decade, to be explained? Does it arise out of a combination of indifference and ignorance? Certainly only the uninstructed could seriously believe that we can at this moment of time give to India a complete democracy which will be in any sense of the word a true democracy, where the will of the people will in the last resort prevail. Only they could assert that Indians as a whole desire such a form of government, or that it would be in the true interests of India. Equally certainly, only the indifferent could have watched without feelings of grief and indignation the history of our mandate in Palestine—a country where our Government was

resented by none, but where for the first time in our long Imperial history we failed to provide security for the peoples committed to our charge. Do we no longer care to ensure that our rule is good, or that those who live under it derive material benefit from it? It is hard enough in the numerous discussions that take place upon our Imperial problems to discern any voice raised on behalf of the masses who live under our Empire. When we are considering whether we should relax our rule further, the question whether the step will promote their welfare is simply not debated. Indeed we constantly hear it said—for example—that we went to India for trade, and that is all we are really concerned for now. And the question that is really uppermost in the English mind is, can we resist the demand for complete independence? Yet independence settles not one single one of the problems which really concern the welfare of the masses in Egypt, or in India, or in Palestine. Nor is it in the least true to say that the masses want it. They can be, and have constantly been, stirred to violent expressions of discontent by political agitators. But is it imagined for a moment that they have thus responded because they have genuine political aspirations? They do not understand the machinery by which our constitutions work: they neither comprehend nor sympathise with the doctrine of responsibility. But they have their grievances, and it is by dwelling upon these that the agitator inflames them, utterly disregarding the fact that political changes would have no more remedial effect upon these discontents than the man in the moon. Good administration is their only desire and concern—and it is because we have allowed administration to be obscured by political issues that we have brought

such heavy troubles upon the shoulders of all concerned.

In all these countries the real problem has been administrative, and we have chosen to regard it as political. What was the reason? Was it simply the hypnotism exercised over us by the disastrous cry of "self-determination"? or were we also the victims of a growing indifference to responsibilities which did not appear to concern our purely material welfare? There will probably be many people who will be stirred to indignant protest at the suggestion that either of these explanations is correct. But none the less there is ground for examining both of them, and for holding that the combination of the two may have formed a stimulus at once insidious in its persuasive force, and powerful in its dangerous results. People who are attracted by the purely material appeal of a policy of "cutting losses" can shelter themselves behind the moral value which a policy of "self-determination" appears superficially to possess. Those who are naturally inclined to run after misty ideals find themselves strangely reinforced and supported by their natural enemies, the self-interested cynics. The fallacies and anachronisms which are inherent in the theory of self-determination have already been analysed and laid bare by writers much better qualified than I am for the task. The dangers which have resulted from it in Central Europe are brutally apparent to all of us. Self-determination is in fact the watchword of a world that has departed—it wrought noble deeds in its day—but it has been maintained in our present century by minds which look at our problems academically and without real understanding. These have imposed upon us a settlement of the world's difficulties which is unnatural and can only be maintained by force, yet



they are invincibly opposed to providing or employing the force which alone can preserve such a settlement until it has made its own roots. The result is fear, uncertainty, and unrest. How much longer are we to continue to worship broken idols?

Palestine provides us, as far as our own problem is concerned, with perhaps the best reasons for investigating the causes of our bewildering lack of policy. It is a country to which we were invited by its own people: and we assumed the responsibility for its government at the request of the nations of the world. There was therefore no possible room for any doubt in our own minds as to the legality and the disinterestedness of our position there. The Mandate which we received from the League of Nations laid down the lines of the policy which we were to pursue, and it was a policy which consorted with declarations we had previously made ourselves. It was in fact a settlement of one post-War problem, not imposed by victorious arms, or by the will of one nation, but made and approved by the nations of the world. But the devil of self-determination entered into this swept and garnished room, and conflicts arose very soon. When the real clash came, it found us neither forewarned nor forearmed, with the result that we failed to maintain the rule of law and the good order which it was our first and essential duty to preserve. Whatever may be said of Egypt or of our Imperial dependencies, as to Palestine there was no doubt regarding the equity of our position and our right to govern. The cause of our failure cannot therefore be found in the actions of a bygone generation. The tyrannous behaviour and unsympathetic habits of our fathers towards Palestinians are clearly not the root of our present troubles. Yet our failure there was in all

respects similar to our failure elsewhere. So that it seems clear that we must look for some cause that lies in ourselves, not in our past history: and it appears to me that we are forced back to the conclusion that the fault lies with this subtle combination between lack of interest and a disruptive faith in self-determination. From somewhere has come a prevalent desire to get rid of responsibilities which superficially appear to bring no material profit; from America has come the dangerous dogma which has obsessed our political thinkers. The combination of the two must bear the immediate guilt for the blood that has so constantly been shed in the countries for which we have been responsible since the War.

I shall not plead for a deeper recognition of our responsibilities, or for a lesser preoccupation with an out-of-date idolatry. These will come inevitably by a natural reaction, which is already beginning to show itself. But if there is a section of the vocal public in England who really think that we can solve our difficulties by throwing off these responsibilities, I would warn them with all the earnestness at my command that such a course will solve none of the problems which now confront the world, will raise a still larger crop of new problems, and will destroy our credit and prestige to such an extent that we shall cease to have any effective voice in the councils of the nations.

We are already shaping a course which will carry us dangerously near to that point. And if the story of Egypt can teach us any lesson, it is the lesson that chaos threatens at the end of that path. In solving the problem which arose at the end of the War, we decided to bury out of sight the responsibilities which we had undertaken for so many years. We concentrated instead upon our own superficial interests, and

forgot in our extremity that the two must go hand in hand, or run the risk of separate extinction. We declared Egypt to be "free and independent" in accordance with the silly slogan of the time, but we affirmed the sanctity of our own interests, and it was essential in order to preserve those interests that we should be prepared to maintain them whole and undiminished with all the force of which we were capable.

Instead, we decided to try our hand at bargaining, and Lord Allenby was very wise in the view which he consistently held that bargaining was wrong and useless. We had conceded the real point at issue before we began. We had admitted Egypt's claim to independence, and Egypt had conceded nothing in return. Upon that claim of hers she stood with single-minded persistence; at every stage she met us with the same argument of her independence: every one of our demands was tried by that test and refused. Very quickly the weakness of our position was exposed, and we appeared to ourselves and to the world weakly struggling and contemptibly failing to restore by bargaining a position which we had not the courage to maintain by other means. The days of our strength and beneficence were gone. Cromer and Kitchener, whose word was power, were but dim memories. Their successors were no longer armed with the prestige of a powerful and single-minded Empire, but hardly knowing what policy they were to carry out from day to day, must descend to the ignoble level of intrigue and opportunism, in a struggle that could bring no profit. In that contest they were doing sadly little to promote happiness or prosperity. They were fighting a rearguard action on behalf of an Empire which had lost the desire to do good, whose policy was directed, if at all, by a sorry

eagerness to divest itself of responsibilities for which its statesmen were no longer great enough. The story which we have now to tell is one of almost unbroken retreat. Again and again we shall find the British Government taking up positions from which it solemnly declares that it will never be moved: again and again we shall find it a few months later in full flight from those positions. Distrustful of its strength, uncertain of its direction, its only activity will be retreat, while it covers its indecision by a parade of sentiments which will either be misunderstood or despised. Nothing in our history is more grievous than the continuing incapacity which our Governments have displayed since 1919 to uphold their own declarations against difficulties which they invariably proved afraid to face.

The first volume of my narrative brought the history of our relations with Egypt to the point where the Milner Mission was to commence its investigations. There remains to be told the story of the subsequent years, for four of which I was myself His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt and the Sudan. My knowledge of the events with which the present volume deals is therefore much more intimate than my knowledge of the years dealt with by the first volume: and for that reason I shall hardly be able to escape from imparting a more subjective flavour to my narrative, and adopting a more personal tone. If I do not at all times succeed in maintaining that degree of aloofness which scientific treatment demands, I can only hope that the disadvantage to science will be balanced by a heightened dramatic interest.

The years with which we now deal are separated from the years of the Occupation by the deep gulf of

the War. Until 1914 we had been sure of our Imperial mission. There were domestic quarrels as to how that mission should be carried out, but no serious doubt as to its existence. After 1920, on the other hand, self-determination will be found to have shaken to its very foundations our faith in an Imperial policy of any kind. Self-determination will be found to govern our dealings with Egypt, and to obsess the minds of all concerned. After the passage of a decade it is perhaps not too soon to assess the results that this new theory has produced. It has been at work not only in Egypt, but through the whole of Europe and Asia. With the havoc it has wrought elsewhere we are not directly concerned, but there may be useful lessons to be learned from tracing its course in the Nile Valley,

## CHAPTER II

### THE MILNER MISSION: AN ATTEMPT TO APPLY THE NEW POLICY OF SELF-DETERMINATION

At the close of the first volume the Milner mission had just arrived in Egypt. Its members disembarked in December 1919, in the face of almost universal hostility.

The Mission's terms of reference were as follows: "To enquire into the causes of the late disorders in Egypt and to report on the existing situation in the country and the form of the Constitution which, under the Protectorate, will be best calculated to promote its peace and prosperity, the progressive development of self-governing institutions, and the protection of foreign interests." It was a body well selected for its purposes. Experience of Egypt was provided by its President, Lord Milner, who had had first-hand knowledge of administration of the country during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and had written a book which had become an acknowledged work of reference in regard to the difficulties and achievements of the British occupation in its early years. Among his colleagues also were Sir Rennell Rodd, who at the beginning of a highly distinguished diplomatic career had served under Cromer; and General Sir John Maxwell, who was well known to and much regarded by a later generation of

Egyptians, while his administration of martial law during the early war years had enhanced an already great reputation. Sir Cecil Hurst was specially chosen to advise in regard to the important legal aspect of the Mission's problems from the point of view of international law. Sir Owen Thomas represented the British Labour Party, and Mr. J. A. Spender was well known for his steady advocacy of the Liberal point of view in international affairs and for his professions of sympathy with small nations. The Egyptian extremists eagerly attacked the appointment of Lord Milner as President of this Mission, in particular they seized upon and publicly criticised any passage in his book upon Egypt which might be said to show a "reactionary" attitude towards the problems of the country. But the fact remains that alike by his intense devotion to the true interests of Great Britain, by his wide experience of kindred problems, by the commanding position which he had achieved, and by the natural attainments which had raised him there, Lord Milner was pre-eminently fitted for the task entrusted to him.

The arrival of the Mission coincided with the most intense point of the agitation for independence. In addition to the series of attempted murders of Englishmen, attacks were made upon the lives of Egyptians and the Prime Minister himself had a narrow escape on December 15. At the same time the boycott of the Mission had been organised to a pitch at which it was for all practical purposes complete. The report of the Mission tells the story in detail. The Sultan and his Ministers were the only Egyptians who entered into relations with the Mission on their arrival, and even they held an attitude of marked reserve and refused to express opinions. The rest of

Egypt, some because they would not but most because they dared not do otherwise, held themselves entirely aloof: strikes of protest, telegrams of protest, processions of protest, bitter protesting articles in the Press, followed one another in an unending stream. The heads of the El Azhar University published a letter to the High Commissioner demanding the withdrawal of the British from Egypt. Six princes of the family of Mahomed Ali published a similar communication, which they sent to Lord Milner. "The headquarters of the Mission were constantly "watched by unostentatious pickets. The visit of any "Egyptian of note was at once communicated to the "Press and became the subject of minatory comment. "Moreover the offender was liable to be subjected to "a domiciliary visit in his own house from a group of "students, demanding an explanation of his conduct, "which generally ended in his making a profuse pro- "fession of his Nationalist faith and affirming that in "his conversation with the Mission he had been careful "in no wise to depart from it. . . . Meantime the move- "ments of members of the Mission were carefully fol- "lowed, especially when any of us went into the pro- "vinces. Emissaries would be immediately despatched "from Cairo to dog our footsteps, to try to prevent "our getting into touch with the local people, especi- "ally the fellahin, and to arrange demonstrations cal- "culated to impress us with the solidarity of Egyptian "opinion. The visit to Tanta of one member of the "Mission led to serious riots, which continued for "many days and were only quelled by the intervention "of the military." In fact the organisation of the ex- tremists had been triumphantly successful; they had been given time to organise a boycott of the Mission, they had availed themselves of it and their domina-



tion over Egypt was complete. It was merely an academic consolation that the Mission derived from reporting that "they (the extremists) certainly failed in "their main object, for it was impossible not to come "to the conclusion that, if the Egyptians were really "so unanimous as we were intended to think, we should "have been left to find that out for ourselves by going "about the country without let or hindrance". The conclusion was accurate enough but it was not one upon which either the Mission or His Majesty's Government felt at all inclined to act at this moment.

Now, however, the situation had become abundantly clear. On the one side His Majesty's Government had quite definitely announced their intention to maintain the Protectorate. The Secretary of State had said so unequivocally in Parliament, the High Commissioner had said so in the Residency at Cairo. He had been asked by a non-official British deputation whether it was intended to give up the Army of Occupation and had replied that not even the Protectorate was to be abandoned. The Milner Mission's own terms of reference were "to report "on . . . the form of the Constitution which, *under* "*the Protectorate*, will be best calculated, etc., etc."

On the other side Zaghlul Pasha and his party had refused to recognise the Protectorate, had demanded independence, and by the surrender of the previous April had been allowed to gain an almost complete control over Egypt.

Here was a deadlock which could only be ended by a partial retreat upon one side or the other. The Mission did not hesitate, but began to retreat at once. On December 29 they issued a declaration, which stated that "The Mission has been sent out by the "British Government, with the approval of Parlia-

“ment, to reconcile the aspirations of the Egyptian  
“people with the special interests which Great Britain  
“has in Egypt and with a maintenance of the legiti-  
“mate rights of all foreign residents in the country”.<sup>1</sup>  
This was, of course, a complete misstatement of the  
position, as a glance back at the terms of reference  
will show. The real fact was that the Mission had  
been sent out to reconcile Egyptian aspirations, not  
with the special interests of Great Britain but with  
a maintenance of the British Protectorate. That  
maintenance, however, was creating a deadlock and  
it was therefore to be surrendered by this declaration  
of December 29.

The Declaration was in fact an enormous concession to Egyptian demands: after two weeks in Egypt the Mission tore up its own terms of reference and committed the British Parliament to the abandonment of the Protectorate which until that moment had been solemnly declared to be a cardinal point of British policy. Vast as it was, the concession did not have the desired effect. “This declaration certainly  
“had some effect in mitigating hostility, but it did not  
“get over the reluctance of Egyptians generally to  
“enter into formal relations with the Mission.” There was nothing for it, therefore, but to fall back upon the material—valuable and comprehensive as it was—which could be collected from official and from non-Egyptian sources. Armed with this material, the Mission at the beginning of March 1920 returned to England.

Before we follow them there it is necessary briefly to review the general state of affairs existing in Egypt in the early months of 1920. Political crimes of violence were still taking place: on December 26, 1919,

<sup>1</sup> Official Journal, December 29, 1919.

two British soldiers were attacked in Cairo and severely wounded. The serious riots at Tanta have already been referred to: they took place on January 20 and following days. At about the same time a bomb was thrown at Sirri Pasha, a prominent member of the Cabinet, and a similar attack was made in February upon Shafik Pasha, the Minister of Agriculture. By these attacks the nerves of the Prime Minister and his colleagues were seriously shaken, and it was feared that they might resign their posts. Their task was indeed difficult enough without the constant threat to their lives. One of the strongest weapons in the hand of the political agitator at this time was the economic position. There was a serious shortage of wheat supplies, which was sending up the price of bread in the towns and causing much hardship among the poorer classes. The British wheat supplies Commission was coping efficiently with a difficult situation, but this remained anxious and uncertain in spite of the Commission's assistance, and there was always the possibility that the area under cotton would have to be restricted—a step which would be universally unpopular, both in Egypt and elsewhere. It was in fact the high price of cotton which was causing the difficulty. By it and by the general dislocation of post-War supplies a situation was being created which is in Egypt naturally very dangerous—in which the fellaheen were financially prosperous and therefore restless, while at the same time they were unable to obtain the commodities they needed.

Another serious difficulty was brought about by the failure to conclude peace with Turkey. The negotiations dragged on despairingly, and the uncertainty thus created had a very damaging effect upon the

mind of Egypt. Lord Milner, at the head of the Mission, was extremely anxious to know how the terms of peace would affect the status of Egypt: and upon this point a penetrating and decisive suggestion was made by Lord Allenby: "If it has not "already been done", he wrote, "I would suggest that, "in addition to Turkish recognition of the Protectorate over Egypt, she should at the same time be required to cede to H.M.G. all prerogatives and authority over this country formerly enjoyed by the Sultan as suzerain . . . such a stipulation seems to be a "natural result of victory over Turkey, and a right of "suzerainty based on conquest would have considerable moral authority and would fortify our position "here".<sup>1</sup> It is quite impossible to understand why this brilliantly simple and logically decisive suggestion was never taken up. "If it has not already been done", wrote the High Commissioner, as though apologising for suggesting the obvious. In 1914 we had had our first opportunity of putting our occupation of Egypt upon a sound basis. We had thrown that opportunity away in a moment of weak foolishness, yet here was a generous providence offering us the second chance which so seldom comes to the foolish. This second chance, beautifully simple and complete, we never regarded at all. It was perhaps the most perfect example of the uncoordinated methods by which the treaties of peace were too often negotiated.

To return now to the activities of the Mission. Their report tells us that by the time they left Egypt they had come to certain conclusions accepted by all the members, and these conclusions are set out in Section II. of the report itself. Dealing first with the causes of the recent unrest, this section points out

<sup>1</sup> F.O. despatch, Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, March 13, 1920.

that the position which England occupied in Egypt had never been legalised. "We have never honestly "faced the Egyptian problem, and our neglect to do "so is in a measure responsible for the present situa- "tion". The history of the status of the British in Egypt is then summarised, and of this summary the key sentence runs as follows: "It appears to be fre- "quently assumed in current talk and writing in this "country that Egypt is a part of the British Empire. "This is not and never has been the case." This very definite and unqualified assertion forms the principal foundation of the Mission's recommendations of our subsequent policy: it is therefore of extreme importance, yet it is a statement which in such a form seems by no means easy to justify. From the practical point of view there is hardly one argument to be adduced in its favour. From 1904 onwards there had been as a matter of hard fact, apart from the Khedivial position, only one difference between the state of affairs in Egypt and in similar parts of the British Empire. That difference had been the existence of the capitulations, which all authorities had agreed must be terminated in the interest of Egypt, but which could only be terminated if our occupation were maintained. The British Government had in practice controlled the internal and external affairs of Egypt, and that control had in no way been limited by considerations of legal status. Our policy had been the gradual education of Egypt to a self-governing status under our aegis—the same policy, in fact, which governed our treatment of other Eastern dependencies within the Empire. In theory, of course, the affair stood upon a different footing—owing to our failure, noted by the Mission, to face the facts squarely. But even on the battlefield of theory the Mission's statement

of the case had to meet, and did not attempt to meet, a very considerable weight of argument: for, however true the Mission's statement might have been of the situation before 1914, in that year a British Protectorate had been declared and the situation had thereby been completely transformed.

However ambiguous and insecurely based that declaration had been, its intention was at least perfectly clear. The reader has only to turn to Chapter XIV. of the earlier volume to remind himself that the desire and the purpose underlying the declaration of a Protectorate were definitely that Egypt should become part of the Empire. There was no wish or intention to keep her outside the Empire, but there was unfortunately a weak attempt to camouflage the position and to maintain the fiction that she was not losing her individual status. It had been a feeble compromise, but the intention which underlay it had never been disguised. Moreover, it was an accepted canon of international practice that a protected nation became part of the Empire of the protecting power. And finally we have the statement of no less an authority than Cromer himself to show us how the Protectorate was regarded by English authorities. "After hanging in the balance for a period of '33 years", he writes in 1915, "the political destiny of Egypt has at last been definitely settled. The country 'has been incorporated into the British Empire. No 'other solution was possible. Provided that the statesmanship be skilful and that there is no undue haste, 'the adoption of this measure, far from hindering, will 'tend to facilitate the execution of that rationally 'Liberal policy to which Great Britain is wedded in 'dealing with its outlying dependencies.'" <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Abbas II.*, preface, p. xvii.

To assert, in the face of these facts, that Egypt never had been part of the British Empire was to surrender not only the policy of 1914 but also the whole series of arguments by which the continued evolution of our persistent intentions could be justified. At a blow the Mission wiped out the work of many years and returned to a position which was no longer tenable except in disregard of a large part of recent history. It was a preface as unfortunate as it was unsupported.

The remainder of Section II. of the report is concerned with the circumstances which had been the immediate cause of the disorders, with a review of events after the War, with an account of the Nationalist movement, and finally with the ideas of the Mission in regard to future policy. In regard to the first of these subjects—the discontents created by the War—there seems to be one important omission in the review given in the report. The grievances which were created by the exigencies of war are fully detailed, but nothing is said of the complete security and the very large measure of prosperity which the whole country had enjoyed as a result of the War. Resources calculated conservatively at £100 million had been accumulated during the War, and of these about £13½ million had been used to purchase Egyptian securities held abroad, and so to lighten very considerably the burden of foreign debt. For the period of 1914–21 the Treasury could show a revenue of £177 million as against an expenditure of £179 million, which meant that during that period, while other countries were pouring away their income and capital, nearly 99 per cent of Egypt's expenditure had been met out of current revenue, and the reserve had only been drawn upon to the

extent of £2 million. Egypt had emerged from the most destructive war in world's history with immensely increased national resources, and with no adverse balance in the operation of her public finances and a negligible increase in taxation. Her only economic loss was constituted by the arrears in upkeep and development of public works. This prosperity was not only an important feature of the picture of war-time Egypt—counterbalancing, as it did to a large extent, the grievances so often described—it was also a ponderable cause of the disorders, owing to the peculiar attribute of Egypt, that her people must wax fat before they will kick.

As to the events subsequent to the War, the Mission came to the conclusion that "The consequences "of deporting the Nationalist leaders were not rightly "estimated, and the revoking of that measure, after "serious disturbances had taken place, necessarily gave "the impression that British policy was wavering and "liable to quick changes under the pressure of agitation". Agitation had in fact achieved over the local authorities the same success that the boycott was now about to win over the Mission who wrote these words. In view of the manner in which major concessions of principle were made to the extremist boycott in this very report, it is interesting to read the conclusions which the Mission formed in regard to the Nationalist movement. "It has been said", runs their report, "that "every Egyptian worth his salt is at heart a Nationalist. This is only true of the educated and semi-educated classes, who constitute less than 10 per cent of "the fourteen million inhabitants of Egypt. It would "be meaningless as applied to the 92 per cent of "illiterates, and especially to the fellaheen, who are "two-thirds of the whole people." The small upper



and middle classes were strongly Nationalist; the large masses of the fellaheen not at all so. Even among the upper classes a large number of individuals were misled by unjustified apprehensions and by deliberately false propaganda. Any chance of success there might be for the Mission's policy lay therefore in the possibility of conciliating these moderate elements among the educated.

How such conciliation could, in the view of the Mission, be successful is demonstrated in the paragraphs which deal with future policy. "We gradually "came to the conclusion that no settlement could "be satisfactory which was simply imposed by Great "Britain upon Egypt, but that it would be wiser to "seek a solution by means of a bilateral agreement—a "Treaty—between the two countries." Unfortunately the further conclusion was inevitably reached that the only way to negotiate such an agreement was not with the moderate elements, but with Zaghlul and his extremists, who were already committed to a fanatical policy of no compromise with England's claims. Zaghlul Pasha was in Paris, and no persuasion could yet avail to make him return to Egypt and meet the Mission (not unnaturally in view of the extreme standpoint he had all along taken up in regard to the Mission). Nothing remained, therefore, but to return to England with the material so far collected. The Mission arrived in London about the middle of April, but at the same time their unofficial emissary, Adly Pasha Yeghen, arrived in Paris and put himself into communication with Zaghlul Pasha. The latter must by this time have begun to tire of his ineffectual sojourn, which, however, he could hardly terminate without any tangible result. He must already have been anxious to return to Egypt, yet how could he

profitably return empty-handed? In these circumstances, the opportunity offered to him by Adly Pasha of meeting the Mission, and securing from them some proof of the profitable nature of his activities, must have been by no means unwelcome. He allowed himself to be persuaded, and on June 7, with several other members of his self-constituted Delegation, he arrived in London. From that date commenced a series of conversations with the Mission which continued until August, and a series of concessions on the part of the Mission which altered the whole British position in Egypt.

The story of these conversations, as told in the Report, is interesting and illuminating. "There was "never any doubt in our minds that our visitors were "as sincerely anxious as we were ourselves to find a "way out of the difficulties of the situation. But they "were to some extent hampered—and this is specially "true of Zaghlul Pasha himself—by the uncompromising line which they had taken in the recent past. ". . . Over and over again they declared that it was "impossible for them to accept some proposal or other "made by us, the fairness of which they did not "directly dispute, because it was inconsistent with the "mandate which they had received from the Egyptian "people." It was the story, newer perhaps then, which we have since heard so often, of the unwillingness of the Oriental politician to accept responsibility. Zaghlul Pasha had created the policy and had imposed it upon his countrymen: now when it came to taking action he wished to shuffle out of the responsibility and shift the burden from his own shoulders to others. The same difficulty cropped up at every stage. "The "idea of a treaty between Great Britain and Egypt "was readily accepted. That was our starting-point,

“and without it we should have made little progress. “But when it came to discussing those terms of the “Treaty which embodied the few, but essential, safe-“guards for British and foreign interests, the Egyp-“tians were always extremely apprehensive of agreeing “to something which might conflict with their ideal of “independence. As a matter of fact, our proposals did “not conflict with that ideal—reasonably interpreted “—as the Egyptians themselves, or at any rate some “of them, were ready to admit. But there was always “the fear in their minds that their countrymen would “not take the same view, and that they would be re-“garded in Egypt as having betrayed the national “cause.” These accusations of treachery which are so freely employed by Nationalist agitators and form so large a part of their stock-in-trade generally end by threatening their own creators. Those who teach others to throw stones increase their own chances of being stoned. The fear of it hangs over them always and takes away from them the courage to assume responsibility. But the knowledge of this fact did not discourage the Mission in their efforts at conciliation, and at last the stage was reached of drafting terms. “This result was only achieved by considerable con-“cessions on the part of the Mission.” This was indeed a mild statement of the case. The Protectorate had been discarded, the policy of trusteeship for the masses and for anything except foreign interests had been tacitly but completely dropped: and now even in regard to British interests concessions were beginning to be made, not to the reasonable claims of Egypt, but to the violent hostility of extreme agitation.

Even then the Mission, as might indeed have been anticipated, did not achieve the object which it sought. When the heads of agreement had been

drawn up, Zaghlul Pasha and his colleagues refused to commit themselves to any definite support of them. "They were evidently still nervous of being repudiated by a considerable number of their followers in Egypt. They accordingly kept on suggesting further modifications of the terms so far agreed to, mainly on points of form, with a view of making them more acceptable to Egyptian opinion." The Mission, however, could go no further for the moment in the way of concession. "We seemed, therefore, after all to have reached an impasse."

A way out was, however, found. The position was that a general agreement had been reached between the "Delegation" and the Mission. The Mission were prepared to support this agreement in public and to recommend the acceptance of its principles to the British Government. The "Delegation," on their side, were not prepared to shoulder responsibility. They were afraid: afraid of their own public and afraid to commit themselves. In these circumstances it was suggested that some members of the "Delegation" should visit Egypt and explain "to the public of that country the nature of the settlement which the Mission was disposed to recommend, and the great advantages which Egypt would derive from it. If, as they hoped, they met with a favourable reception, this would constitute a 'mandate' from the people which would justify the 'Delegation' on the return of the emissaries, in pledging itself to give our proposals an unconditional support." This exit took the negotiators out of their impasse, but it took them no further than that. They were now deep in the maze of Oriental bargaining, from which Egypt and ourselves have not yet emerged. Public opinion in Egypt was non-existent without a lead, and Zaghlul Pasha

was afraid of public opinion and had not the courage to give it a lead. However, "a memorandum was accordingly drawn up" and communicated to Zaghul Pasha and his friends, of which they were to make free use in public discussion in Egypt. This memorandum was published immediately after it came into Zaghul's hands, without the consent of Government—and apparently without the knowledge of Lord Milner. The British authorities expressed themselves as horrified, but what else did they expect? They had presented Zaghul with a golden opportunity of committing them to large concessions while he himself remained committed to nothing. It is hardly credible that their simplicity or ignorance really permitted them to hope that this opportunity would not be instantly seized.

The rest of the story is soon told. In September four members of the Delegation, Mohamed Pasha Mahmoud, Ahmed Lutfi Bey el Said, Abdul Latif Bey el Mukabati, and Ali Bey Maher, returned to Egypt for the purpose of testing public opinion in regard to the suggestions now made. Had Zaghul at the same time publicly expressed even a small measure of enthusiasm for the suggestions, there is little doubt that they would have had, in the first flush of excitement, a good chance of acceptance. Instead he published a long manifesto in which he very carefully refrained from committing himself to any expression of opinion, but stated merely that the result of the recent discussions would now be submitted to Egypt for consideration. The four delegates arrived at Alexandria on September 7 and were accorded a hearty and enthusiastic reception. The Local Committee of the "Wafd" were at first extremely enthusiastic in regard to the proposals which the delegates brought

back, but after reading Zaghlul's very lukewarm manifesto, they naturally began to hedge. This same manifesto gave the extreme left—the Hisb-el-Watan—a free hand to express a violent disapproval of the proposals and to protest that they were not compatible with Egyptian independence. At the same time opposition began to be organised from another quarter. Mohamed Said Pasha, last year's Prime Minister, was not only personally hostile to Zaghlul Pasha; he was also uneasy as to what might be the results in Egypt of the large measure of independence which the proposals foreshadowed. He now became extremely active behind the scenes, and was not improbably reported to be the instigator of the manifesto which Prince Omar Toussoum and three other princes of the royal family now issued condemning the proposals as a restriction upon Egyptian independence. But so far as the testimony of educated opinion could be secured, it was undoubtedly favourable, and the most conclusive proof of this lay in the vote recorded by the members of the old General Assembly of 1913: out of forty-nine remaining members only two opposed the proposals. The princes were by this time thinking second and more favourable thoughts, but the forces of opposition were still strong and vital. There were always those who violently hated the British and desired complete severance, and their accusations of treachery were still the strongest weapon in the whole armoury of the strife; many, however, who used that weapon were far more afraid of Egyptian independence than desirous of it. The Mokattam newspaper, for instance, which voiced an apparently intransigent opposition, suggested with some ingenuity that the fellaheen had not yet been consulted, and that if they were they would doubtless

vote for complete independence. Seeing that the truth was probably exactly the contrary, the motive behind this daring suggestion could not but be suspect. It was a fine field for intrigue and agitation, but unlikely to be productive of definite results. In the end the four delegates returned to England and reported to the Milner Mission that the Egyptian people were favourably disposed towards the proposals: but here they added, in the best Oriental tradition, that there were certain points of which further modification was desired. By this time, however, the Mission had had enough. They felt perfectly rightly that it was not for them to bargain further. The so-called principles upon which discussion could take place had been outlined and to some extent agreed. The details of the Treaty which might eventuate could not be negotiated with the Mission—it was not their province—but with accredited representatives of His Majesty's Government. Negotiations with the Mission accordingly came to a somewhat indeterminate conclusion in November 1920, and the next step would have to be taken by means of official negotiations between representatives of His Majesty's Government on the one hand and of the Egyptian Government on the other.

The British were not very strongly placed for entering upon such negotiations. From the position which they had held in the previous autumn they had already retreated so far that it was no longer in sight. They stood committed to far-reaching concessions, whereas Egypt stood committed to nothing. In the previous year she demanded independence, and in all the negotiations with the Mission the "Delegation" had never conceded any public qualification of that demand. From the bargaining encounter we had emerged as very distinctly the losers. We had

surrendered a great deal and gained nothing—not even tranquillity; the Egyptian extremists had gained much and surrendered nothing—not even disorder.

It would be fair perhaps to say that the Mission had approached their problem in a spirit which was extremely generous towards Egypt. The defects of British policy, the faults of the administration during the War and subsequently were all described without any attempt at palliation or whitewashing. The services which Egypt had rendered during the War were acknowledged very handsomely and nothing was said of the substantial benefits she had received. The aims, temper, and behaviour of the Nationalist agitators were most sympathetically described. Their excesses were excused, and everything that could be said in their justification was carefully set down. With these generous preliminaries the Mission approached the crux of their problem: was there no middle course between a forceful domination of a hostile Egypt and evacuation? Yes, they replied: the problem could be settled by an entirely new method of treatment, the method of free bilateral agreement. This new method could find no basis in the policy which we had so long pursued towards Egypt. Under that policy we had a declared responsibility—the obligation was upon us, and was universally acknowledged, to ensure order and a stable and humane government. The Mission, however, made no reference to this responsibility and no attempt to prove that its object had been achieved. Instead they acknowledged the independence of Egypt and stipulated only that British interests and foreign interests must be safeguarded. They conceived that a mutual agreement was possible under which these interests could be safeguarded; but when we come to study



the memorandum containing their proposals—the so-called Milner-Zaghlul Agreement—we find that their hopes for the future are based upon nothing more solid than their own pious and rather sentimental aspirations. The proposal which the Mission make is supported by premises for which there was only the most slender justification in fact, and which were almost immediately falsified by events. “Would not “an orderly and friendly Egypt, in intimate association “with Great Britain, serve British purposes as well, or “even better [than a hostile Egypt], while removing “all sense of grievance and all spirit of revolt on the “Egyptian side?” Obviously the answer to this question must be affirmative. But to ask it in this form was to shirk a whole string of questions which had prior claims. Would any concessions at this stage render Egypt orderly? or friendly? or intimate? or free from all sense of grievance and all spirit of revolt? The statement simply assumes that all these advantages will result. It was in this dangerously optimistic spirit that recommendations for a Treaty were put forward. And it was in exactly the same spirit that the Mission made the series of special concessions which formed a large part of the “Milner-Zaghlul “Agreement”. The principles of these proposals—wrongly styled agreement—was a Treaty of Alliance in which England would recognise Egypt’s independence, while Egypt would recognise England’s need to protect her own special interests and her responsibility to safeguard the interests of foreign communities. England would support Egypt in defending herself, and in return would receive from Egypt all the assistance Egypt could give within her own borders, even when the integrity of Egypt was not affected. The treaty was to stipulate for the following special

points: (1) Egypt's right to representation in foreign countries; (2) Great Britain's right to maintain forces on Egyptian soil; (3) Great Britain's concurrence in the selection of a Financial Adviser; (4) her concurrence in the selection of a Judicial Adviser; (5) Great Britain's right to intervene to protect foreigners from the operation of laws which under the capitulations required foreign consent; (6) a special position for Britain's representative; (7) the termination at will of the services of British and foreign officials within two years after the treaty comes into force.

Of these points the first was a very generous concession. The Mission were fully aware of its dangerous possibilities, but they assumed that their proposals would result in a friendly Egypt. "We rely on the "whole policy here proposed to have this effect." Similarly with the seventh point—the right to dispense with the services of British officials. "The idea of any "Egyptian government, however free to do so, at- "tempting to make a clean sweep of its foreign officials "is a chimera." . . . "No sensible Egyptian seriously "wishes to dispense with foreign aid", . . . "any general "or rapid displacement of the British and other foreign "officials is not to be anticipated." . . . "It seems to us "very improbable that such an exodus [of officials] "will ever assume large dimensions." All these assumptions—the basis of the concession—were, as we shall see, almost immediately shown to be wrong. All this generous sympathy was expected to secure the goodwill of Egypt. The Mission, apparently believing that they had worked a miracle on the heart of Pharaoh, recommended the speedy initiation of Treaty negotiations. Their spirit of optimism was shared by the Government at home and by Lord Allenby. Detailed correspondence was carried on

in regard to the personnel of the delegations which should conduct the negotiations and all was now hopefully assumed to be for the best. Through spectacles so thickly rose-tinted the authorities could hardly expect to see the troubles which were soon again to fall upon them.

## CHAPTER III

### CONFUSION

THE Milner Mission gave an entirely new aspect to our relations with Egypt. It turned over a new page, and on the blank sheet thus exposed it wrote that we must no longer regard ourselves *in loco parentis* in our relations with Egypt. We were now nothing more than well-wisher and privileged friend—privileged because it had to be remembered that the friendship was by force of circumstance close and intimate, and that we had therefore interests that must be regarded. True, the friendship had been ruffled and the friends estranged, but we were magnanimously prepared to forget the past, and we were sure that when once Egypt realised the generosity of our intentions, she on her side would be prepared to renew and improve her friendship with us, and to recognise our special interests and help us to promote them.

It was upon this basis that the new era was to open. The hopes which were entertained were voiced, however, entirely by one partner in the negotiations. Zaghlul and his party still dominated the political mind of Egypt, in so far as it found public expression, and Zaghlul and his party were still concentrated upon Egyptian independence far more keenly than they were prepared to work for Anglo-Egyptian friendship. There was evidence enough of the exist-

ence in Egypt of a large volume of moderate opinion which desired a reasonable accommodation, but no evidence at all that such opinion would dare to express itself openly. At the present stage, however, we were so far committed to the new attitude that there was nothing for it but to take whatever risks were involved and to enter upon the negotiations from which it was hoped that the treaty of friendship might result. Although the Mission had completed its labours in 1920, it was not until early in January 1921 that its report was forwarded to Lord Allenby in Cairo, accompanied by an official despatch from His Majesty's Government which stated that "before taking any decision . . . they desire to profit by consultation with the official delegation from Egypt, which it has always been in contemplation to invite to this country, and which a promise was given by your Lordship to His Highness the Sultan that he should at a later date be requested to send. I shall be glad therefore if you will take the necessary steps with the Sultan and the Egyptian Government for the appointment and despatch of this delegation at an early date so that they may be available for consultation with His Majesty's Government in the forthcoming spring. . . . Both parties will enter the discussion with free hands; since, pending the exchange of views to which I have referred, His Majesty's Government have not thought it right to arrive at a final judgment on either the principles or the details of the proposals contained in the report."<sup>1</sup>

All that remained to be done, therefore, was to select the Egyptian delegation, but the residual task was not by any means so simple as at first sight might appear. It was true that as far as the internal political

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Curzon to Lord Allenby, January 6, 1921.

situation was concerned there was a marked lull in activity and interest. The economic situation was to a certain extent improving owing to a gradual fall in prices: the Sultan's tour of the provinces during the month of January showed that for the time at any rate he had achieved a remarkable popularity among the fellaheen, while Adly Pasha was undoubtedly collecting a very considerable body of support for his moderate and accommodating political views. Meanwhile Zaghlul and most of his political colleagues were still in France, and it was widely reported that a section of these exiles favoured Adly's quiet methods, much more than the autocratic violence of Zaghlul. These factors all tended to create an atmosphere for action by His Majesty's Government. Now, if at all, was the moment to negotiate with a reasonable hope of success. Unfortunately the Government were still hesitating and unable to make up their minds. As we have seen, it was not until January that they sent the report officially to Egypt, and the despatch with which they accompanied it was not at all calculated to satisfy the expectations of Egypt. Lord Allenby was quick to point out that this despatch clearly indicated that His Majesty's Government were not committed to approval of any of the recommendations made by the Milner Mission, or to implement any one of them. "The fact remains", he wrote, "that the proposals conveyed to Egypt in August were from the first regarded by the public opinion of Egypt in general as proposals which must eventually constitute a substantive offer by His Majesty's Government." If it were now to be understood that Great Britain did not feel herself in any way committed to the principles recommended by the Mission, it was extremely doubtful whether it

would be possible for the Sultan to collect a delegation of any weight at all. "To sum up," said Lord Allenby, "Egypt expects a declaration of policy by "His Majesty's Government based upon Lord Milner's conversation, and then to be called upon to produce a delegation to discuss details of settlement."<sup>1</sup> This statement, however unpalatable, was entirely correct, and Egyptians were quite justified in adopting such a point of view. The method adopted by the Mission had inevitably committed the British Government to the general principles of the report. The bargaining method had resulted in a triumph for Egypt and a surrender for England: it was the first of many such encounters and all of them ended in the same way. The Government of Mr. Lloyd George were not, however, prepared to accept the inevitable at once, and it was a display of reluctance which lost them the best of their opportunity. The delay gave time for the usual intrigues and dissensions to be set on foot in Egypt. Uncertainty begat a recrudescence of political activity; the Zaghlulists in particular were attacked by a rising anxiety as to how the formation of an official delegation from Egypt might affect their position and prestige. At the end of January five of Zaghlul's colleagues arrived back in Egypt, Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, Hamid Pasha el Bassal, Abdel Aziz Fahmy Bey among them. Their return increased the uncertainty and anxiety, for it was fairly clear that they had had dissensions with Zaghlul himself, and it was not known what steps they contemplated.

At last, on February 18, 1921, the Milner Mission's report was released for general publication, but it was still unaccompanied by any declaration on the

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, January 12, 1921.

part of the Government. They were waiting with evident uneasiness for the indications of feeling in England which the debate in Parliament would afford. The degree of their nervousness was sufficiently indicated in the debate on the Address, when the Prime Minister, referring to the proposed negotiations, said: "if it had been possible I should have liked also to take into consultation the representatives of the Dominions before we come to any decision. It is a matter of most vital moment to the Empire, to the peace of the middle East, and to our future relations with India." Clearly Government did not relish the policy to which they had been committed, and it was equally clear that so anxious and unconvinced a frame of mind was not the best prelude to the new era. They had, however, to swallow the pill whether they liked it or not; and on February 22 the High Commissioner was authorised to inform the Sultan that "His Majesty's Government, after a study of the proposals made by Lord Milner, have arrived at the conclusion that the status of protectorate is not a satisfactory relation in which Egypt should continue to stand to Great Britain. While they have not reached final decisions with regard to Lord Milner's recommendations, they desire to confer regarding them with a Delegation nominated by the Sultan, with a view, if possible, to substitute for the protectorate a relationship which would, while securing the special interests of Great Britain and enabling her to offer adequate guarantees to foreign powers, meet the legitimate aspirations of Egypt and the Egyptian people."<sup>1</sup> The medicine had at last been swallowed at a gulp, and very nasty it must have tasted.

Meanwhile the work of forming the Egyptian de-

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Curzon to Lord Allenby, February 22, 1921.



legation was going forward. The proposed procedure had received no public set-backs, although Egyptian opinion had been alarmed by Lord Milner's resignation from the Cabinet, and then incensed by a daring proposal of Mr. Winston Churchill's, made at a public dinner, that she should take place among the Dominions of the Empire. But in private there was a great deal of disturbing activity. Adly Pasha was now the inevitable centre-piece of any possible picture of accommodation, and the British in particular reposed their hopes upon him. He was the only Moderate leader who was in close touch with the Zaghlulist spokesmen, and at the same time he commanded the most general influence among the various non-Zaghlulist groups. There was the Prime Minister to be given his due place and dignity: there was Mohamed Said Pasha, with his powerful friends among the princes of the Royal Family. There were Rushdi Pasha, Sarwat Pasha, Mazloun Pasha, who must not be slighted, and finally there was the Legislative Assembly of the future, whose approval must somehow be ensured. As to Zaghlul, the common view was that he would not consent to serve, and that however much his colleagues might think with Adly Pasha, they would not desert Zaghlul. All these problems sufficiently absorbed the interest of politically minded Egypt, and the promulgation of the sentences upon the twenty-two prisoners convicted in the "Society of Vengeance" trial caused little or no excitement, even though Abdel Rahman Bey and six others were condemned to fifteen years' penal servitude. Negotiation and discussion proceeded interminably until, on March 14, there came a minor crisis. Mazloun Pasha, whom the Sultan had intended to be head of the delegation, resigned the

post, and new plans had to be made. The result was the formation of a new Ministry with Adly Pasha as Prime Minister. Hardly had this difficulty been overcome when a manifesto was published by Zaghlul which, while it welcomed the new council of Ministers, laid down the following conditions of participation in treaty discussions. "Abolition radi-  
"cale du Protectorat et acceptation des réserves,  
"suppression de la censure et de l'état de siège avant  
"tous pourparlers." In addition he demanded a majority for the Wafd upon the official delegation. Such terms were of course quite impossible of acceptance either by Egyptian Ministers or by the British Government. But this public utterance of Zaghlul had its usual effect of shaking the nerves of all concerned. As far as Adly Pasha and his colleagues were concerned, the precedent local discussion and intrigues must have placed a considerable if not uncongenial strain upon them. Adly Pasha would not serve under Tewfik Pasha, the then Prime Minister. The Sultan would not allow Adly Pasha to take a commanding position: and in working to this end he fell under the influence of Mohamed Said Pasha, who was widely supposed to be against the whole policy of treaty, and to be intriguing actively to thwart it. In the end the High Commissioner had to intervene to put an end to this futile pursuit of personal intrigues, and the Sultan got a Ministry under the leadership of Adly Pasha which he did not much like, but which was probably the best obtainable for its purpose. But there still remained Zaghlul's ultimatum, and a great deal of anxious discussion as to what was to be done about that, and what would happen after his return to Egypt, which actually took place on April 5.

The arrival of Zaghlul immediately raised the internal situation to boiling-point. He was accorded an enthusiastic though orderly reception by the masses, and it at once became clear that hopes of his influence waning were entirely unfounded. He began his public activities moderately enough, offering collaboration with the Ministry, but he was not careful in private to conceal his true frame of mind, which was one of jealous rage against Adly Pasha. He would not brook for a moment even the possibility of a rival. "I have suffered, I have worked. I will not see "credit for what I have done taken away by Adly. If I "work with him, it will only be when he consents to "take his orders entirely from me, and to acknowledge "my undisputed supremacy." The High Commissioner sent depressing reports in regard to the possibilities in Egypt. "The question whether the Ministry "can now control the situation is, to say the least, "problematical. Whatever may happen, I must maintain law and order. . . . I believe that Zaghlul is in "such an exalted state of mind that it would not be "beyond him to attempt a coup similar to that of Arabi "Pasha."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Zaghlul fully realised that such action on his part was certain to provoke British intervention; he did not at all desire such a turn of affairs, and he was very careful to avoid giving expression to anti-British sentiments. Indeed, he was so filled with angry hostility to Adly and his Ministry, that his activities were entirely concentrated upon discrediting them by all possible means, and he could think of little else. The situation was not by any means pleasant for Adly Pasha, who had first of all to try and conciliate this angry hero, and if he could not do that then to cut his claws. Adly Pasha's hopes of

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, April 8, 1921.

succeeding in either task were infinitesimal, but if he failed his situation as Prime Minister and head of the delegation was bound to become impossible. He was already urging the High Commissioner to take some steps to meet Zaghlul's conditions. Could not something be done to satisfy the demand about martial law? Unfortunately not, because an Act of Indemnity was an essential precedent, and no Act of Indemnity would be of value until the negotiations were over and the new constitution established. Could not the Press Censorship be abolished? Yes, if Adly was prepared to do without it, which he was not. The next thing, then, was to consolidate the Ministry's domestic position and to increase its popularity in the country. For this purpose an obvious opportunity was offered by the cotton situation, where steadily falling prices were causing much hardship to tenant farmers. The effect was not greatly felt until the autumn of 1920. But disaster was bound to ensue from the fact that, as the result of the War boom, rents had been raised 100 and in some cases 200 per cent. The boom of cotton prices continued well into 1920, in which year cotton was selling at 187 dollars a kantar (twelve times pre-War price). But in that same year the reaction set in, and the price of a kantar of cotton had fallen to 20 dollars at the beginning of 1921. Only 40 per cent of the 1920 crop had been sold. Owing to the immense profits obtained during the boom period, landowners at least were in a strong position to withstand a crisis, and the general fall of prices came as a boon to many sections of the poorer classes. Moreover, the financial strength of the country was undoubtedly immense. Egypt was therefore in a strong position, and all that was needed to keep her there was a cautious prudence and a drastic limitation of expenditure to revenue.

Although, however, the causes of the slump were not local, and were therefore out of the control of any one government, Adly and his Ministers had light-heartedly claimed that they would set matters right, and had even gone so far as to make particular promises. They now announced their intention of undertaking Government purchases of cotton on the Minet-el-Baset exchange. The step was useless, speculative, and dangerous: even the Ministry realised that it was financially unjustifiable. But by means of it they could buy a certain amount of political support: and so anxious were the British authorities in regard to the stability of the Government, that they gave their consent to a step which was from the economic point of view entirely unsound. Times had changed indeed!

By the end of April 1921, it was clear that no agreement was possible between Zaghlul and Adly Pasha. Neither would consent to surrender the headship of the delegation. On April 19 there was a riot at Tanta, in which the police were compelled to fire on the mob, and owing to the constant propaganda against the Ministry, and official counter-pressure, it seemed inevitable that further disorder would break out. The chances of a successful outcome of the proposed negotiations, slender as they had always been, were now reduced almost to invisibility. Nothing was left but for Adly to form a delegation from among his own political associates—members of the old Turkish families, many of whom commanded no respect among their countrymen, while all would be easy prey for Zaghlul's Egyptian slogans. Meanwhile, during the time that they would be in London negotiating, Zaghlul would be consolidating his position in Egypt and preparing a magnificent brew of trouble. On May 10 the Prime Minister had composed his delegation—

Hussein Rushdi Pasha, Ismail Sidky, Mahomed Shafik Pasha, Ahmed Talaat Pasha, Youssef Soliman Pasha. An able delegation, but not one by any means calculated to secure enthusiastic popular support, still less the ratification of any results it might achieve. On May 18 there were large anti-Government demonstrations in Cairo, which were only with difficulty dispersed by the police. On May 20 Alexandria flamed up; two police stations were burnt that day: and the police were forced to fire with effect. Cairo too was the scene of further disturbances, and many casualties. On May 22 the Alexandria situation developed seriously: there was heavy fighting between Egyptian mobs and Greeks and Italians in which thirty Egyptians and fourteen Europeans were killed, and the British military authorities had to take over the administration of the town. On May 25 the High Commissioner published a communiqué in which he announced a determination not to interfere in Egyptian party politics, but pointed out that in the last resort the duty of maintaining law and order devolved upon him. He then reviewed the measures which His Majesty's Government were taking to meet Egyptian aspirations, and appealed to Egyptians to be peaceful.

So apologetic and appealing a document was naturally very welcome to Egyptians, who must have been anxiously waiting for His Majesty's Government to draw the natural conclusion from the present state of affairs, that further progress was impossible. They were surprised and delighted to find that this was not to be the case: but it was equally natural that the European communities should be angry and alarmed, and should point out that non-intervention was being carried demonstrably too far when it allowed murderous outbreaks to occur. They argued that the author-

ity whose duty it was to suppress such outbreaks had a much more urgent duty of preventing them, and the logic of this argument was unanswerable. By this time, however, political considerations had attained a preponderating importance, and principles of all kinds were being sacrificed for them. But Adly Pasha was quite right in insisting that there was nothing for it now but to go to London and begin the negotiations. The High Commissioner advised delay, and was anxious as to what might happen if disorders continued and those responsible for the administration were absent. There is no evidence to show that he realised that the trouble in Egypt had resolved itself into a personal struggle between Zaghlul and Adly, and that with the departure of one protagonist, it was reasonable to hope that there would be a lull until his return. Adly Pasha, if not more provident, was at any rate quite determined to go to London, and he had his way. The delegation departed from Alexandria for London on July 1, 1921, without disturbance, and Zaghlul was left to carry on his campaign against the Ministry and his preparations against a possible general election.

While the negotiations in London are proceeding to their inevitable failure, and during the lull which ensued in Egypt, we may take the opportunity to review the general state of affairs in that country. Fortunately for our purpose, it happened that Mr. Boyle, who had been for many years Cromer's Oriental Secretary, and who possessed a vast and intimate knowledge of Egyptian character, mentality, and society, was revisiting Egypt at this time and has left a record of his impressions. The memorandum makes refreshing reading after the half knowledge, the lack of understanding, and the misdirected sym-

pathy of the post-War years: a clear, bright light for a moment replaces the smoky torches that had now for so long been the sole illumination of our official footsteps. Mr. Boyle was left in no doubt that the British Occupation, as it was, possessed not a friend in the country, "The words 'patriotism', 'the nation', 'freedom and independence', with which the Nationalists endeavour to conjure have no charm for the mass of the people. . . . At present, however, they are thoroughly dissatisfied and a deep-seated feeling of unrest pervades the whole country." He sums up the existing situation as follows: "The Egyptian people are heartily weary of the state of uncertainty which has hung over them during the last years, of the inefficiency which they consider to prevail in the Administration generally, of the rumours and reports as to chops and changes of policy, of the clash and counter-clash of political parties, of the tension and insecurity in which they live. They have lost all confidence in British influence and control as now exerted. They look forward with painful apprehension to the possible establishment of a purely native Government, which, however, they are prepared to accept, even, in order to save themselves, with some outward appearance of enthusiasm—if it becomes inevitable, and if they can hope for nothing better." What assets had we? Our past history, a general absence of personal hostility among the masses, and the personality and position of the High Commissioner, Lord Allenby, whose lack of Egyptian experience was offset by his high reputation as a victorious and gallant soldier, his remoteness from any suspicion of personal interests, aims, or desires, "even his appearance and manners, of the type which most impresses the Egyptian mind". Mr. Boyle was left with no final doubt



that the immense majority of the Egyptian unofficial classes sincerely desired the continuance of British rule, but he was equally sure that hardly an individual among them would dare to say so in existing circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

It was depressing to learn upon such expert authority that our present policy was based upon a timid misreading of the facts, and that we were now endeavouring to force upon those whose welfare had been committed to our charge something which they neither desired nor themselves thought they deserved. Mr. Boyle had no difficulty in concluding that the cause of the trouble was the deterioration of our rule, and that the remedy should have been its regeneration. We need not doubt the wisdom of that conclusion, but unfortunately the decision had already been taken against it. Politics had won an overwhelming victory over administration, and it was universally agreed that "Nationalism" and "self-determination" were dictates which must be obeyed unquestioningly. Mr. Boyle, speaking from a past already almost forgotten, urged the claims of good government and the welfare of the people. In his day these claims had had a moral value which was universally acknowledged. But in 1920 they were discredited and lifeless. Only one claim had a moral value—the claim of "Nationalism": only one claim was universally acknowledged—the claim of "self-determination."

Expert observers, like Mr. Boyle, would point out that the claim to be free and independent was not genuinely a national claim; that the true grievances of the masses were not political grievances and were quite separate from national aspirations. Such was the attitude of the times that these facts carried no

<sup>1</sup> Memo., June 11, 1921.

weight at all. Indeed the Milner Mission, which signed the surrender to Egyptian Nationalism, knew the facts just as well as Mr. Boyle, and stated them almost as clearly. But in the hypnotic state induced by the constant repetition of transatlantic doctrines, it had become immoral to oppose the claims of nationalism by any argument, however sound. Nothing must be done to impede the severance of old ties and the carving up of the world's surface into more and yet more "self-determined" units. The process, like the fragmentation of the Indian peasants' land, had taken on the dimensions of a religious rite, and it was blasphemous to point out that, as it increased, happiness and prosperity would diminish in proportion.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROTECTORATE ABOLISHED: THE DECLARATION OF FEBRUARY 1922

WHILE the negotiations in London were dragging themselves through the length of the summer of 1921, Egypt was enjoying a watchful respite from disturbance. Her moment of danger was the arrival of four Labour members of Parliament in the early autumn. Sarwat Pasha, who was acting as Prime Minister, was perturbed at the bare idea of their visit, and besought the High Commissioner to prevent it. His worst fears were justified, for when these four gentlemen arrived in Egypt they attached themselves to Zaghlul, in whose company they visited a number of provincial centres, where, in their presence, and with their tacit support, he made violent public attacks upon the Government. The Acting Prime Minister reported officially in this sense to the High Commissioner, adding that before the arrival of the M.P.'s the country had been quiet, whereas now a very dangerous era of effervescence had set in. He asked that the British military authorities should prohibit further demonstrations of this kind. A great deal of correspondence ensued as to what steps, if any, should be taken in response to this official request from the Egyptian Government. Eventually nothing was done, in spite of the fact that Zaghlul's

activities were becoming more and more unrestrained and dangerous, and grave disturbances were feared as a result. Since the probable outcome of this visit was clearly foreseen by the authorities, it is difficult to understand why they remained so inactive. These gentlemen were brought out to Egypt by Zaghulul for a clearly defined purpose—to wreck the position of Adly Pasha's ministry in Egypt and destroy all chances of his carrying the negotiations in London to a successful conclusion. Encouraged by the moral support of their presence, Zaghulul Pasha became more and more violent in his attacks upon the Ministry, the Delegation in London, and the British Government; he was clearly determined to destroy all obstacles to his personal domination, and was deaf to all other considerations. But the British authorities still maintained the paralysing practice of non-intervention which the recommendations of the Milner Commission had inaugurated. It was essential to their policy that a treaty should be secured: Zaghulul was making a fierce attempt to prevent a treaty: the British had the power to counter that attempt. But they did nothing—sat by and watched the treaty negotiations wrecked. And then—strangest of all—when the damage had been done, the negotiations broken off, and the situation brought to danger point, they suddenly, as we shall see later, altered their practice and took action against Zaghulul and his colleagues long before there had been any time or opportunity to appreciate the altered state of affairs and frame a considered policy to meet it.

Starting from a position so hopeless in its passivity, with negotiations proceeding in a despondent atmosphere in London, and Zaghulul violently at large in Egypt, it was perhaps natural that the British

authorities in Cairo should regard their state as difficult and lugubrious. Mr. Scott, the Acting High Commissioner, and his advisers were beginning to display a considerable and not unnatural anxiety. If no settlement eventuated in London, would public opinion in England stand for such measures as might be necessary to impose a settlement? They did not think so, and were inclined to put forward tentative suggestions for the retirement of the British force in Egypt beyond the Suez Canal, suggestions which could only be justified by optimistic prognostications of Egyptian reasonableness. There is indeed strong evidence that a defeatist view anxious to make large concessions to the Egyptian demands was beginning to make itself felt in official circles. It was being canvassed in the Residency, and was even making headway in the Department of the Interior.<sup>1</sup> The Milner Mission's proposals had clearly destroyed the confidence of the British officials in Egypt. They did not know what Great Britain wanted, but they read the signs to mean that, although with vacillating and hesitant steps, England had none the less definitely planted herself on the path leading to evacuation and was moving slowly in that direction, and away from her responsibilities in Egypt. If that was the case, they were determined to be in the van of the movement, and had no intention of fighting heroic, still less forlorn rearguard actions. They took the view that it was no part of the duty of the Chancery staff to endeavour to restore confidence in Whitehall or in Egypt. They preferred instead to take the initiative in suggesting surrender and the vicious circle was made complete.

In November negotiations finally broke down. On

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Archives, 1921.

receiving the news that this was probable though not yet final, Mr. Scott at once wired to Lord Curzon<sup>1</sup> that British Advisers to the Egyptian Government had drawn up a memorandum stating that a liberal policy on the part of His Majesty's Government was essential, and that without it they could not expect to retain confidence of Egyptian Ministers. On November 19 Lord Curzon and Adly Pasha had their last meeting. This was followed by the preparation of a letter from Lord Curzon to the Sultan, which has been widely regarded as an error of judgment. This letter was, it is said, written in a spirit of outraged disappointment: it adopted a hectoring tone which was not unnaturally resented: and it was very difficult to discover any object which it could possibly serve except that of venting an undignified but not unnatural irritation. It was useless as well as uncalled-for to blame Egypt for what she was. It was we who had surrendered to the extremist demand and most important of all it was we who with open eyes had shouldered the risk of negotiating. Egyptians had not done anything to mislead us: we had gambled upon our own reading of the situation and we had no right to turn upon others when that reading proved false.

The negotiations had broken down chiefly on two points—the maintenance of a British garrison in Egypt and the control of Egyptian Foreign Affairs. Upon the first the attitude of the British Government was that, in order to discharge her responsibility for the integrity of Egypt and to safeguard her own interests and the interests of foreign communities, the existence of a British force in Egypt was essential. The view of the Egyptian Delegation was that such a force conflicted with Egyptian inde-

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. Scott to Lord Curzon, November 17, 1921.

pendence. The simple argument of independence was indeed the principal if not the sole argument upon which Adly Pasha relied. It was an argument with which we had supplied him in violation of past history and existing facts. He was in a very strong position, therefore, for he had simply to reiterate, "you assert that your aim is Egyptian independence, and each claim that you make conflicts with that independence"; and to such an assertion there was no answer either in logic or law. It was the presence of British troops that had made the Occupation and had assured to Great Britain her complete control over the administration of Egypt—"sans que besoin fût d'aucun texte de traité, d'aucune détermination de pouvoir quelconque".<sup>1</sup> Yet we were now asking Egypt to give formal agreement to a state of affairs which had been the very essence and basis of British domination. No negotiator, least of all an Oriental, could have failed to make effective play with so temptingly obvious a weakness in his opponent's position.

The case was the same in regard to Foreign Affairs. We were suggesting what amounted to a heavy restriction upon Egyptian independence. How could we propose it in view of our declarations, or expect Egypt to agree to it? Between the two points of view agreement was impossible—a deadlock resulted, just as in the previous year a deadlock had resulted between Zaghlul and the Milner Mission. And again the only way out was by concession upon the one side or the other. At first sight it seemed as if the British Government were determined to stand firm, for the declaration made to the Sultan on December 3, 1921, did not attempt to cover with a velvet glove the iron

<sup>1</sup> Reply of the Egyptian Delegation, November 15, 1922, to Draft Treaty presented by British Delegation.

hand of threatened retaliation. But it was soon clear that this declaration was merely the result of a temporary attack of spleen—an attack which did considerable harm but had no permanent meaning. On December 5 Adly Pasha returned to Egypt, and on the 8th he placed his resignation in the hands of the Sultan. The difficulty now was to secure the formation of a new ministry, and the obvious person to undertake the task was Sarwat Pasha, who had been throughout the summer acting as deputy for Adly. Sarwat Pasha was prepared to accept, provided he could get good terms. On the 11th he submitted a programme which ignored the treaty negotiations, so far as they related to British claims, but accepted them so far as they related to British concessions. If the protectorate was terminated, the sovereign independence of Egypt recognised, and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reconstituted, Sarwat Pasha would be prepared to take office and to prove to Great Britain that her obligations and interests could safely be entrusted to the care of Egypt. On December 15 His Majesty's Government, on the advice of the Residency, agreed to this programme, but what policy they were pursuing by such agreement it appears that they themselves hardly knew. The policy which had been followed since the Milner Report had been the policy of bilateral agreement. That policy had now broken down, and the position had reverted inevitably to the *status quo ante*—the Protectorate. Now by accepting Sarwat Pasha's terms the British Government surrendered the Protectorate and thereby created in Egypt a situation which can only be described as one of legal chaos. Such was their haste indeed that they gave themselves no time to realise the extent of that chaos.



This was drifting with a vengeance, and it is not to be wondered at, now that all sense of direction had been lost at home, that the Government's advisers in Egypt should be found giving free rein to their fears, and that those fears should be giving to British policy a decided impetus in the direction of evacuation.

As usual, the gift of concessions had none of the expected effects. Sarwat Pasha had wrung from the British the conditions which he demanded for the formation of a Ministry, but no Ministry resulted. His special difficulty was that Adly Pasha Yeghen refused to support him. Adly followed the common Egyptian practice and at once asserted that the concessions secured did not go far enough. Perhaps, also, he felt, as Zaghlul had done a year before, that it was rather more than he could bear that he should do all the work while somebody else took the profit. Meanwhile the direction of British policy was rendered still more obscure by the sudden arrest and deportation of Zaghlul Pasha. On December 19 the Pasha was prohibited from holding a large meeting at Cairo. He protested turbulently, and was therefore ordered to cease political activity altogether. He refused to obey this order, and on December 22 he was arrested and removed to Suez for deportation. Presumably this action was taken in pursuance of the Government's primary duty of maintaining public order. If so, it was too late to be effective, for Zaghlul had been left at large for many months which he had used to prosecute the campaign of inflammatory agitation now culminating. Moreover, the arrest of the Pasha was not the inception of a series of determined measures for the restoration of order: on the contrary, it was an isolated act almost immediately followed by further

political concessions which coincided with further outbreaks of violence.

The news of the deportation was followed at once by lawless demonstrations. On the 22nd two British soldiers were attacked in Cairo, one of whom subsequently died of his wounds. There were demonstrations on the immediately following days, all accompanied by violence, at Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez. And the year ended with the cold-blooded murder of Mr. Hatton, an official of the Egyptian State Railways, who was shot in the back and killed on December 30.

Zaghul Pasha left Suez with his fellow-deportees on December 29 for Aden, from which port it was intended that he should be taken to Ceylon. But so sudden and unpremeditated had been the manner in which the authorities in Egypt had acted that those concerned in his destination had not been consulted. After a prolonged stay at Aden, while these matters were being arranged, he was finally taken to a more permanent residence in the Seychelles Islands. Thus in the short space of one month there had been Lord Curzon's stern admonitory letter to the Egyptian Government of December 3; on December 15 the capitulation to Sarwat and the surrender of the Protectorate; and on December 22 the arrest and deportation of Zaghul—a truly amazing sequence of events. The situation was becoming impossibly confusing, and it was high time that Egyptian policy should be straightened out from its present erratic course. The High Commissioner's views were soon made clear: on January 12 he communicated to the Secretary of State the draft of a letter which he proposed to send to the Sultan. The letter began with a number of paragraphs designed to counteract the

effect of Lord Curzon's letter of December 3. It went on to announce that His Majesty's Government were prepared without waiting for a treaty to abolish the Protectorate and recognise Egyptian sovereign independence: that they would "view with favour" the creation of a parliament with the right to control "the policy and administration of a constitutionally responsible government." Finally, martial law was to be abolished as soon as an Act of Indemnity had been passed.

The letter outlined a policy which was startling in its novelty, but the explanatory despatch<sup>1</sup> which accompanied the draft shed some, though not much, light on its obscurity. Zaghlul's arrest was now described as being an "essential preliminary to a final attempt to realise the friendly relations with Great Britain which, in spite of disappointment, they [Egyptians] still desire". It may be gravely doubted whether many Egyptians would regard Zaghlul's arrest in this light, but the passage quoted shows at least that the arrest was primarily a political move, and an attempt to strengthen the moderate elements from whom so much was hoped and so little gained. The view is confirmed by the preceding sentence: "proposed letter is the result of exhaustive negotiations with Sarwat Pasha and his immediate adherents. They, on their part, have been in contact with wider circle, and Adly Pasha has been in close touch, and has lent valuable and disinterested assistance." The last paragraph of this despatch was couched in curiously urgent language, asking for approval "without modification", and authorisation to send the letter "without delay". The same nervous note is visible in all subsequent correspondence from

<sup>1</sup> F.O. despatch, Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, January 12, 1922.

Cairo on this subject. To a request for "fullest available information", and a suggestion that Mr. Sheldon Amos and Sir Gilbert Clayton should come home to furnish this, the High Commissioner replies:<sup>1</sup> "Advice I have given to His Majesty's Government is my *final* considered opinion after full discussion with those most capable of advising me. I am certain that my proposals, if immediately accepted, will prove the basis of a lasting settlement in Egypt. If they are rejected, I foresee nothing but a rule of repression driving us to annexation of the country, which would greatly increase our difficulties." And finally: "any prolonged hesitation on the part of His Majesty's Government will seriously undermine my influence. Departure to England of two advisers could not fail to have same effect at once. Amos, Clayton, Patterson, and Dawson have nothing to add to opinions they have already expressed. They are in complete accord with me." This is certainly not the language of persuasion, and it is very difficult to escape an impression of nervous strain lying behind these dogmatic assertions, or to refrain from asking how far the High Commissioner had committed himself in his conversations with Egyptians.

The Government at home did not, however, yield at once to these representations. On January 24 they answered that they attached the greatest weight to Lord Allenby's opinion, and were fully impressed with the advice and assurances which he stated he had received: but that in effect they were being asked to surrender a position which they considered vital to the Empire in exchange for assurances which at present had no binding value, because they had not been put in any tangible form. If Egyptian Ministers

<sup>1</sup> F.O. despatch, Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, January 20, 1922.

sincerely held the views they had expressed to Lord Allenby they should experience no difficulty in giving explicit assurances in regard to them. The answer from Cairo was the ultimatum which previous despatches had clearly foreshadowed.<sup>1</sup> "The long delay "has caused a rapid deterioration in political situa- "tion. What was possible last week may be impos- "sible next week. I have dealt with Zaghlul and "enemies of order, and now is the time to show con- "fidence in and uphold those who are ready to work "with us in the interests of Egypt. Unless His "Majesty's Government generously and boldly make "concessions I have recommended I see no chance of "retaining co-operation of those who appreciate true "situation. I will do my best to carry out policy of His "Majesty's Government, but I have no hopes of being "able to obtain pledges required. No Ministry exists, "and if it did, no Egyptian dare at present sign his "name to a bargain for anything less than complete "independence. If His Majesty's Government will not "take my advice now they throw away all chance of "having a friendly Egypt in our time. I am confident "of success if my advice is followed even now, but "there must be no delay. Though I have divulged no "secrets, my opinions are well known here, and if the "advice I have offered is rejected I cannot honourably "remain. I therefore beg that my resignation may be "tendered to His Majesty with expression of my "humble duty. Pending my removal I shall of course "continue loyally to carry out your instructions." Lord Allenby was confessedly holding a pistol to the head of the Government. As to the accusation of delay the facts were that his first proposal had been despatched only on January 12, at which time both the Prime

<sup>1</sup> F.O. despatch, Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, January 25, 1922.

Minister and the Secretary of State were fully engaged at the Conference at Cannes, so that the matter could not be discussed in Cabinet for several days at least: even so, it was only twelve days before their considered reply on so momentous a proposal was sent off. Nor was the now familiar assertion of certain success on the one hand, certain disaster on the other, likely to make much impression in a situation obviously so uncertain. The operative sentences were (1) the reminder that no Ministry existed—which did indeed make it difficult to secure the assurances from Egypt which Government desired; (2) the admission that Lord Allenby's views were well known to Egyptians; (3) the resignation. To so direct an assault the Government could hardly be expected to surrender, especially as the position which Lord Allenby had now taken up was not by any means invulnerable to criticism, and both the language and the form of his latest communication were such as must inevitably provoke controversy. The counter-attack was not long delayed, and put the case forcibly enough. "When you returned to Egypt early in November, "you were fully informed of the policy of His Majesty's "Government, which was formulated largely in consultation with yourself and was personally explained "to you. Upon this basis you expressed a confident "hope of obtaining the co-operation of an Egyptian "Government, and indeed at one stage when Sarwat "Pasha stated the conditions upon which he was prepared to assume office, we accepted them without "demur. It was with some uneasiness that His "Majesty's Government saw weeks pass before this "offer took effect. Nor during this period had we any "clear indication as to the lines on which you were "seeking to come to a final understanding with Egyp-

“tian statesmen. Your telegrams 17th to 20th suddenly presented His Majesty’s Government with a plan in which almost the entire position hitherto taken up by them was to be abandoned, and a decision demanded without delay. Your letter practically presented His Majesty’s Government with an ultimatum demanding complete and immediate capitulation on points on which the British Parliament will feel the deepest concern, and which, involving as they do the absence of any guarantee for the future position of Great Britain in Egypt, raise an issue that is vital to the Empire. Nevertheless, in the endeavour to enter as far as possible into the spirit of the Egyptian representatives, His Majesty’s Government have shown their willingness to go to the extreme of concession. They might have expected His Majesty’s representative to welcome the bridge which they were willing to build for Egyptians. But your letter, without either recognising the merits of our carefully elaborated scheme, or suggesting any improvements or modifications which might facilitate its adoption, merely reiterates your ultimatum, declaring that nothing can be accepted or even discussed but what you have put forward yourself, this in fact being identical, as we gather, with the demands which the Egyptians have now formulated as their minimum. If it be true that no Egyptian dare sign his name at present to anything short of complete independence, there must have been a change in Egyptian sentiment which was neither foreseen by yourself when you left England, nor by Sarwat Pasha when he first offered to form a Ministry. We have as yet received no adequate explanation of this violent metamorphosis, and we cannot but regret that you did not accept our suggestion to send Amos and

“Clayton to furnish the fuller information which we sought. His Majesty’s Government cannot therefore accept your resignation until they have had an opportunity of hearing you in person.”

In accordance with this instruction, Lord Allenby left Alexandria on February 3, accompanied by Mr. Amos and Sir Gilbert Clayton: preceded, however, by a long despatch which set out his answer to the Government’s version of recent events. Dealing firstly with the allegation that the policy of His Majesty’s Government had been formulated largely in consultation with himself, Lord Allenby quietly recounted the hard facts, which were that he had all along declared himself opposed to methods of bargaining, and in favour of an uni-lateral declaration; and that during his visit to England in the autumn of 1921 he had only twice been invited to Cabinet discussions, and on both occasions had clearly indicated his dissent from the attitude to which the Cabinet were disposed. As to the “violent metamorphosis” in Egyptian opinion, the High Commissioner recalled that so long ago as 1921 he had warned the Secretary of State that “no Egyptian could become a party to a permanent arrangement between Great Britain and Egypt which fell short of securing complete independence for the latter”. In view of this history, it was difficult not to conclude that the High Commissioner’s recommendations and advice had hardly received the consideration due to them. He might therefore be excused for, though hardly justified in, concluding that a pistol shot was the only means of securing attention and in acting accordingly. He appeared upon less strong ground in his version of recent events. He contended that the letter of December 3 to the Sultan brought about a



violent deterioration in the situation, but it is not recorded that he protested against this letter, nor had he clearly informed His Majesty's Government of its effects. He defended Zaghlul's arrest as a measure which counteracted the effects of Lord Curzon's declaration of December 3, and led to a crystallising of the situation in a manner favourable to action. This argument is a little difficult to follow: His Majesty's Government might be excused for not having fully realised that such unlikely results would accrue from such unpromising causes; and even if the High Commissioner were correct in his diagnosis, it is very difficult to see why such desperate speed was desirable. With Zaghlul and his colleagues removed, with political Egypt expectant rather than turbulent, it could hardly have been disastrous to devote a little time to consideration of policy, and it was certainly unwise that the High Commissioner should commit himself in Egypt to any pronounced views before such consideration had taken place. It could not be effectively argued that a policy which was to put on a more or less permanent basis the future relations of Great Britain and Egypt would fail or succeed, not according to its own merits, but according to its date of announcement; and that its value depended upon a conjunction of political circumstances which had every appearance of being fortuitous. The real reason for Lord Allenby's urgency lay perhaps concealed between the lines of his present argument. Had not the treatment he received from the Foreign Office forced him to the conclusion that a direct assault of all arms was the only method left to him of securing his objective?

Here, however, the controversy comes to an abrupt

conclusion. After the High Commissioner's departure from Egypt, the written was displaced by the spoken word, and of the latter there is no official record. Political argument disappears from the despatches from Cairo, which confine themselves to terse announcements in melancholy succession of murderous attacks upon Europeans. On February 13 Private Kershaw, R.A.M.C., was shot in the back in Station Square; on the 17th an Australian engineer, Mr. Michael Jordan, was shot dead near the Sharabia quarter of Cairo; on the 15th Mr. Price Hopkins, a railway foreman, was wounded on Shubra Bridge; on the 18th Mr. Brown, Controller-General of Administration in the Educational Department, was mortally wounded by two shots from a revolver: and on the same evening Mr. Peach, of the Egyptian State Railways, was fired at and slightly wounded. On February 28, 1922, Lord Allenby returned to Egypt, and made public the following declaration: "Whereas His Majesty's Government, in accordance "with their declared intentions, desire forthwith to "recognise Egypt as an independent sovereign state; "and whereas the relations between His Majesty's "Government and Egypt are of vital interest to the "British Empire; the following principles are hereby "declared:

"1. The British Protectorate over Egypt is terminated, and Egypt is declared to be an independent "Sovereign State.

"2. So soon as the Government of His Highness "shall pass an Act of Indemnity with application to "all inhabitants of Egypt, Martial Law as proclaimed "on the 2nd November 1914 shall be withdrawn.

"3. The following matters are absolutely reserved "to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until

“such time as it may be possible by free discussion and  
“friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude  
“agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty’s  
“Government and the Government of Egypt:

“(a) The security of the communications of the  
“British Empire in Egypt.

“(b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign  
“aggression or interference direct or indirect.

“(c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt  
“and the protection of minorities.

“(d) The Sudan.

“Pending the conclusion of such agreements the  
“*status quo* in all these matters shall remain intact.”

Here then, within six weeks of his original proposal was the unilateral declaration which Lord Allenby had demanded, and in terms almost identical with those which he himself drafted. It now remained to be seen whether he was justified in the confidence with which he had repeatedly asserted that such action would successfully lead to a lasting settlement. The immediate result was to some extent encouraging, for by March 1 Sarwat Pasha was announcing the composition of his Cabinet. The Wafd, on the other hand, were not long in issuing a statement expressing disapproval and disappointment. As far as England was concerned there was no cause for disappointment, for on March 14 the policy of the Government was ratified in the House of Commons by a large majority of votes. But apparently the arrival in power of Sarwat Pasha and his colleagues, although a matter of satisfaction to the Residency, was not by any means pleasing to all sections of Egyptian opinion. There was a riot accompanied by fatal casualties at Tanta on March 2, the Lawyers’ Association adopted a five days’ strike, and many

schoolboys followed suit. It did not seem by any means certain that the attitude of Egypt was undergoing a genuine change: there was still the extreme demand for independence and nothing less: there was still the personal animosity among Egyptian politicians which rendered Governments unstable: there were still in the background those powerful forces, whose movements were so strongly felt upon occasion, yet seldom showed themselves upon the surface.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE HARVEST

ON March 15, 1922, the Sultan assumed the title of "His Majesty the King of Egypt". The announcement aroused no popular enthusiasm, and the Zagh-lulist attitude was everywhere one of sullen dissatisfaction and hostility. On the same day it was officially notified that the High Commissioner had resigned control of Egyptian Foreign Affairs, which had been assumed by the Prime Minister of Egypt. The Proclamation of Independence, made upon the following day, was accompanied and followed by disorderly demonstrations in large towns. It was clear that the new Ministry was widely unpopular, and that the prevailing discontent was by no means allayed. Indeed, unpleasant symptoms were apparent everywhere. A Commission for the purpose of framing a Constitution had not long been appointed before one of its sub-committees laid hands upon a reserved subject—the Sudan. This sub-committee recommended that the Constitution should make provision for the Sudan, and was careful also to give its recommendations publicity. Emphatic representations from the High Commissioner put a stop to these provocative activities, but the affair was symptomatic of what was to be the Egyptian attitude towards the Declaration of 1922. They would recognise that declaration fully

in so far as it surrendered British powers, but not at all when it asserted British claims.

A further indication of coming trouble was afforded by the negotiations in regard to the position of European officials in the service of the Egyptian Government. It was obviously essential in the interests of good administration and of the new Government's credit that a definite agreement should be speedily come to, setting out the right of such officials to resign, and the compensation which would be awarded them upon resignation or dismissal. The Secretary of State was most anxious that the matter should be settled upon a defined basis, and officials themselves were harassed beyond measure by the uncertainty and anxiety which hung over their future. The Egyptian Government maintained, however, an obstinately *non possumus* attitude, and Lord Allenby was not willing to press them in the matter. He pointed out the danger that they might resign, and suggested that the matter might safely be left in his hands to settle each claim as it arose in consultation with the Egyptian Government. This was a condition of affairs which however temporarily satisfactory could not give as much confidence as a permanent settlement, and it does not appear to have appealed to officials themselves, further shaken as they were by the summary dismissals which the Government was already making. The Milner Mission had painted a rosy picture of the goodwill which an independent Egyptian Government would be sure to display towards the British officials, but it was already clear that in point of fact they would be working now in conditions entirely different from those for which they were recruited. Their prospects of promotion were almost completely destroyed, since it was only natural that an

unfettered Egyptian Government would fill vacancies with Egyptians. At the same time, their authority over their subordinates would be impaired, because these latter would inevitably go behind their backs to the elected representatives—a court of appeal which could hardly be expected to be impartial. And it was only too probable that the Government itself would tacitly allow, if it did not encourage, their life to be made intolerable until they were forced out of the service. The risks of the future—to which at the present was added the danger of a violent death—they would be prepared to face, but only if they were relieved of the anxiety of material ruin for themselves and their families.

The fact that the campaign of murderous attacks upon European officers continued with little abatement, and that the offenders invariably escaped unpunished cannot but have added to the general anxiety. On May 24 Bimbashi Cave, Inspector in the Cairo City Police, was murdered in broad daylight, and Colonel Pigott of the Army Pay Corps was attacked near the British Consulate in Cairo on July 15 and shot twice in the lungs. Martial law was still in force, but was apparently powerless to deal with these political crimes, and stern protests from home were equally ineffective in moving the Ministry of the Interior to effectual measures. On July 24 the Wafd made a false move in publishing a manifesto which directly counselled violence as a means of expressing Egyptians' sense of grievance against the Ministry, and its supporters the British. Lord Allenby at once ordered the arrest of the signatories to this manifesto, but the tale of lost British lives was by now a long one. How criminally inefficient had been the Egyptian Departments concerned was now disclosed. Abdel Rahman Fahmy—organiser of the Society of Venge-

ance which had conducted the murder campaign of 1920—was serving his sentence in a Cairo prison, and a prisoner released from the same place of detention informed the Commandant of the Cairo City Police that Abdel Rahman was receiving exceptionally favourable treatment, and was allowed to correspond and receive visitors as he pleased. In view of the state of affairs thus disclosed, it was not surprising that the Government's promise of more effective action did not bear speedy fruit. On August 13 Mr. Brown of the Ministry of Agriculture was attacked while driving to the station with his children. The coachman was killed, and Mr. Brown and his son wounded; the assailants escaped. The British Government again intervened, urging that some definite ultimatum with threat of retributive action should be made to the Egyptian Government, but Lord Allenby replied that "we have made considerable progress towards a "good understanding with Egypt, and are gaining "support of those whose opinions are really sound", and that the action suggested "would put sharp and "sudden check on progress of His Majesty's policy, and "might ruin any chance of coming to friendly understanding".<sup>1</sup> To the delusive hope of such an understanding everything—even the lives of British officials—was now to be sacrificed: it remained to be seen what real profit lay in "the support of those "whose opinions are really sound". Even with Zaghlul deported, and many of the Wafd leaders either imprisoned or under trial, such support was slow enough in coming, and meanwhile, by August 3, ninety-nine European officials had either applied for permission to retire or been dismissed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch : Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, April 18, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 31 ante.



Meanwhile the Ministry of Sarwat Pasha was not free from domestic difficulties. King Fuad had never been on friendly terms with Sarwat Pasha, who was not the Prime Minister of his choice. The undoubted unpopularity of the Ministry, and the state of the provincial administration, provided him with ground of complaint, while he was fully justified in viewing with grave apprehension the activities of the Commission on the Constitution which was drawing up a democratic constitution based upon European precedent and having no relation at all to the existing state of Egypt. At the end of July he was showing his displeasure by refusing to summon meetings of the Council, and was clearly contemplating the dismissal of Sarwat. It would not have been difficult to justify such a step, but again sacrifices must be made to secure the support of "those whose opinions are really sound", and the High Commissioner intervened to insist upon a *rapprochement* with Sarwat. This time it was the interests of Egypt that were sacrificed, for those critics were found to be undoubtedly right who pointed out that the Constitution would be unworkable, and would have to be altered by events of a revolutionary nature. Nor were his views in regard to the administration unfounded. Crime was very prevalent in the provinces, and Mudirs were showing an inclination to slacken their supervision and take things easy. In the Central offices favouritism and nepotism were more frequent and flagrant than the High Commissioner had anticipated. The Departments of Communications and Public Health were suffering more particularly the effects of the new régime—in the former there was slackness and inefficiency, in the latter a marked anti-English bias and a tendency to ignorant interfer-

ence with departmental routine. "The faults of ignorance, vanity, moral cowardice and favouritism "have been apparent, but I hope . . . that the forecasts "of a rapidly developing chaos . . . will be falsified". Such was Lord Allenby's summing up of the situation after seven months of the new régime at the end of September. As to the Ministry's unpopularity, this had long been beyond doubt: Sarwat Pasha and his colleagues belonged to a small group of politicians having but slender ties of any kind with the people at large. They did not possess the qualities which command popular favour, and their methods of administration tended to alienate the sympathies of their own party and of the Government officials. Adly Pasha, by reason of his dignity and probity, commanded a much greater following than any of the Ministers, and it was to Adly that they would have to adhere as a leader if they wished to gain any chance of power under a democratic constitution. Adly Pasha was in fact inaugurating a Liberal Constitutional Party against that day, and Sarwat at least was privy to his plan and supported it; but even such a coalition had little chance of success against Zaghlul with his "national" claims, and the popular veneration in which he was held.

At the moment, however, the business of all concerned was to secure the King's reluctant consent to the new Constitution, and over this business the imminence of responsible government was spreading a cloud of intrigue. First of all the King was resisting, by the many methods open to him, the inception of a Constitutional monarchy. Like all the other Egyptian protagonists he desired dominant power in his own hands, and the business of constitution-making

rovided him with the means of playing for it. To the Presidency he could justly arraign the new Constitution as entirely unsuitable, which it was; to Egypt he could attack it as betraying Egypt's right to the Sudan. Sarwat Pasha quite saw the reasonableness of the British contention that references to the Sudan could be entirely out of place in the Egyptian Constitution—on the other hand, if he acquiesced, he stood to be shot at by the Palace, by the Zaghlulists, and very likely, as he surmised, by his own political friends. Adly Pasha of course realised that references to the Sudan could not be justified, but he was fighting the Zaghlulists and could not afford to give them the right to call him a traitor to his country. Finally such courage as his party possessed was dissipated by the murder of two of its members in October. In the end he took action, which proved Sarwat right, and announced that if the Prime Minister met British wishes in the matter of the Sudan his party would no longer support him. Sarwat Pasha took the natural course at this point, and threw in his hand, resigning on November 29. Tewfik Nessim Pasha was summoned by the King to form a new Cabinet, and the Ministry in support of which we had made such sacrifices and upon which such reliance had been placed, disappeared and was replaced overnight. The situation remained profoundly obscure in the growing haze of intrigue, and the year 1922 ended without a Protectorate, without a Constitution, without an indemnity, and with martial law still in force. Two hundred European officials had been dismissed or aimed permission to retire, and Mr. Robson, professor of the Law School, had been shot and killed in broad daylight on the main road on December 27. Lord Allenby made yet another protest, and the

Egyptian Government delivered itself of yet another expression of regret.

The only person who had any cause to rejoice as the year 1923 opened was King Fuad. He had won a signal victory, discredited the rivals whom he feared, and secured a Prime Minister and a Ministry who could be counted upon to be on the whole subservient to his wishes. But no situation in Egyptian politics could be expected to last long, nor could any progress be expected in the evolution of British policy until the question of the Sudan had been removed out of the way. This could only be achieved if His Majesty's Government intervened to put a summary end to the present methods of intrigue. In early February such an intervention was carried out by Lord Allenby, who acquainted King Fuad with the serious displeasure of the British Government at the delays which were being caused in the introduction of constitutional government, and of their determination, unless he immediately withdrew his claim to be styled King of the Sudan, to review at once, and radically, their recent declarations of Egyptian policy. The King's brief moment of autocratic triumph ended with his acceptance of this ultimatum. He bowed to the inevitable and invited Adly Pasha to form a Ministry. The blow to the king's prestige was great, for the memory was fresh of his attempt to suppress Adly in order to placate Zaghlul. Curiously enough rumours that Adly was about to return to power were almost at once followed by an intensification of the outrages against Europeans. Bomb-throwing now took the place of shooting in the back, and a number of such cases were reported in a short space of time. Adly Pasha was only prepared to take office upon conditions which included the suspension

of martial law, and such suspension was of course rendered quite impossible by the outrages now occurring, so that all hope of securing a Moderate Cabinet thereby disappeared. The situation was thus drifting into a chaotic and dangerous state—it was in fact very nearly back to the conditions of a year previously when Lord Allenby had wrung from His Majesty's Government the Declaration of Independence which he had assured them<sup>1</sup> would be completely successful in restoring a situation otherwise irremediable. The Secretary of State was gravely apprehensive: outrages, in his view, were becoming intolerable: arrests of Wafd leaders were frequent: and no Egyptian Government was in being or appeared likely. To what could such a situation lead except to all the difficulties and dangers of a wide campaign of repression by the British authorities? What was the remedy? Yehia Pasha, Minister of Education in Tewfik Pasha's Government, was now called to the Premiership and accepted. The King clearly thought that Yehia Pasha might be expected to subserve his wishes, but Yehia Pasha was a dark horse, of whom very little was known, either to the public or the Residency. He took office on March 15, amid cautiously worded comments from the Press, and in an atmosphere not unhopeful. The most encouraging factor of all was that he was neither a prominent nor a party politician, so that he would be free from the difficulties of intrigue due to personal rancours. Not being regarded as a serious rival by any of the aspirants to power, he might be left free long enough to get a Constitution in being.

On March 24, with a suddenness which was startling, Zaghlul Pasha was unconditionally released. His

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Allenby to Lord Curzon, January 25, 1922.

medical attendant at Gibraltar, whither he had been removed from the Seychelles, thought he ought to undergo a cure in Europe, and the original intention was to exclude him from Egypt.

The release had been previously discussed in connection with the political situation, and it had been concluded that such a step could only be approved after martial law had been abolished. Actually at the moment of his return martial law was more active than ever: Alexandria and Cairo were for all practical purposes being administered by military authority, and many politicians of the Left were under restraint as a result of martial law ordinances: a heavy fine had been imposed on local subjects of the whole of Cairo, two Arabic newspapers had been suppressed, and a system of preventive arrests had been instituted. Zaghlul himself "did not complain of the climate of "Gibraltar", merely stating that he required "a change "of scene and congenial society". His health, therefore, can hardly have been the genuine reason for the sudden decision to enlarge him, especially as it was followed at once by the release of six members of the Wafd who had been arrested earlier in the month. Nor had the situation in regard to the outrages improved to any appreciable extent. We are left wondering why the decision was taken: was it yet another attempt on the part of the Residency to conjure away difficulties by concession? It was at any rate generally interpreted by the Egyptian Press as heralding a further profound change in British policy, and expectations were aroused which had in fact no justification.

On April 20 the Constitution was promulgated. It followed in regard to the Sudan the lines on which His Majesty's Government had insisted: it owed to

the intervention of the High Commissioner the absence of such reactionary provisions as the King's autocratic inclinations had desired to insert. Egyptian public opinion was on the whole grateful to Lord Allenby and approving of Yehia Pasha, although experienced opinion was inclined to be nervous of such a rapid advance in democracy in view of the actual state of political enlightenment among the masses. Still, things were definitely progressing towards the self-governing Utopia which Egyptians had been promised, and which we had convinced ourselves would do away with all our troubles. The next step was the relaxation of the more drastic provisions of martial law—punctuated by further bomb outrages. The Seychelles deportees were released in May along with other political suspects in Egypt, but it was not until July 5 that the necessary Indemnity law was finally promulgated and martial law abolished. Curiously enough the disappearance of martial law, the existence of which had been the Egyptian Nationalists' principal grievance, took place without any sign of popular enthusiasm, and was accorded no special reception even by the Press. The fact was that the attention and activities of all politically minded Egyptians were gradually being absorbed by the chances of the General Election which was expected to be held very shortly. Whether Zaghlul would return to Egypt for this event was still a matter of doubt, but it was quite certain that in his absence the Wafd chances of success would be very greatly reduced. Meanwhile the Prime Minister Yehia Pasha was proceeding with his task of clearing up the situation in preparation for a constitutional régime. It was of a piece with general Egyptian behaviour that he should have been bitterly attacked in the Press regarding

the Indemnity law, while the abolition of martial law was greeted almost with complete silence. The promulgation by the Government of certain restrictive ordinances designed to take the place of martial law and smooth over the transitional period did not add to the Ministry's popularity. But Yehia Pasha was not lacking in courage and proceeded forthwith to a settlement of the vexed question of European officials, their retirement, and compensation. The law finally passed upon this question did not secure to the officials the terms which His Majesty's Government had originally declared they would insist upon. It was accepted, however, because the existing state of affairs was intolerable, with retirements taking place haphazard; because the prospects of all officials were getting worse and worse, with the promotion of Egyptians to posts previously held by foreigners, and with the growth of a marked spirit of hostility among Egyptians towards their European colleagues; and because any settlement would certainly be far less favourable if it remained to be extracted from a Government responsible to elected representatives. The principle laid down in the law was that European permanent officials were granted the right, exercisable on or before October 31, 1923, of being retired on April 1, 1924, or of remaining on in service provisionally until April 1, 1927. The law was to be administered by a Committee consisting of equal numbers of Egyptian and foreign high officials; and retiring or dismissed officials were to be entitled to a definite compensation set out in detail in subsequent provisions of the law.

Yehia Pasha's term of office had indeed been prolific—an oasis in a barren desert of time. The Constitution, the Electoral law, the Indemnity law, the



abolition of martial law, were its larger fruits. The restrictive ordinances and the settlement of the question of European officials were less palatable; they did not conduce to his popularity, and fully counter-balanced the favour he might otherwise have won. The Pasha had indeed deserved the gratitude of his countrymen, but in the struggle for political power which now ensued his deserts were quite unnoticed. Out of the incidents of the past few months the King had undoubtedly emerged with a strengthened position. Although he had been forced to concede a more democratic Constitution than he himself desired, he had undoubtedly increased his personal influence, both by establishing a closer contact with the Zagh-lulists, and by introducing his supporters into posts of administrative importance. The Zagh-lulists, in the absence of their leader, lacked cohesion and direction. They had the programme which would inevitably appeal most strongly to an ignorant electorate—a programme of inflammatory catchwords—but for the moment they had not the strong personalities to make use of it. The moderate men—now formed into the Constitutional Liberal Party—under the leadership of Adly Pasha, were not in any better condition: they lacked the vigorous programme of the Zagh-lulists, and they had no record of constructive work upon which to rely. Like all moderate parties in un-enlightened countries, they were all leaders and no followers, supine rather than active, relying upon the hope that “everything would be all right on the “night”. The strongest figures in the situation were the King and Zagh-lul Pasha: all now depended upon whether these two would come to an accommodation. If not, in the struggle which must ensue, who would emerge the victor?

From all this His Majesty's representative in Egypt was to hold himself aloof. Although the independence of Egypt had been established a year and a half before this, he had been compelled to intervene on several occasions in internal matters, and to continue the exercise of British direction and control. But now the Constitution was established, and he was looking forward to a period of release, when he could give Gallio's sentence to the contending parties, and drive them politely from the judgment seat. The hope was destined to disappointment, for although his power was perceptibly diminished, his responsibilities remained as great as ever. To the west the Italians in Cyrenaica were pressing for a settlement of the joint frontier, to the south the waters of the Nile were being jeopardised by Italian projects in Abyssinia: the question of the Capitulations, though temporarily in abeyance, was still alive: the defence of complex foreign and of wide Imperial interests still lay upon his shoulders. All these were matters which Egypt could never hope to bring single-handed to a favourable issue. We must work for her, and shield her without any assurance that she would not all the time be working against us. If the hopes which we had entertained of her reasonableness and goodwill were disappointed, our position would indeed be deplorable.

On September 17 Zaghul Pasha landed at Alexandria, and received an enthusiastic but on the whole orderly welcome. The very same day he called upon the King, and had what was on both sides described as a satisfactory interview. At any rate the Pasha opened his public campaign in temperate tones—but not for long. The lessons of exile were soon forgotten, the evidences of his own power and popularity

mounted very soon to his head: and within a week or two, to the anger of the King and the delight of the extremists, he was vehemently attacking the Liberals, the Government, and the British, and putting forward the usual programme of comprehensive destruction. He was for rejecting the declaration of 1922 and revising the Constitution: all that had been accomplished by others was to be wiped out. He would begin again from the beginning and Egypt should owe nothing to anybody but Zaghlul Pasha. "For the moment", he told a representative of the *Journal du Caire*, "we are only preoccupied with independence. It will be time enough to consider our domestic policy when the fiction of our independence is ended." The first step in the Elections was made on September 27 with the nomination of elector-delegates, and resulted in a sweeping success for the Wafd. The moderate politicians, as usual, entered the field too late, and with very little chance of overhauling the long lead which they had allowed the Wafd to establish. The Elections were not completed until January 1924, but even in so long a period the moderate parties recovered no ground, and in the event Zaghlul Pasha found himself with no less than a hundred and ninety reliable supporters in a Chamber of two hundred and fourteen members. The colossal triumph was due in some part to the vigour of the Wafd organisation as compared with the slackness of the Constitutional Liberals, but overwhelmingly to his own personal prestige. Zaghlul had excuse, therefore, for an increase in his personal vanity, but at any rate up to the Elections he had been acting with some restraint, appearing desirous of an understanding of some sort with England, and reserving his extreme violence for his hated rivals Adly and Sarwat Pashas,

and their followers. He was to some extent careful to differentiate between the Liberals and the existing Ministry of Yehia Pasha, and also not to say too much that might provoke the King. The High Commissioner had an interview with him in January, when the Elections were nearing conclusion, and found him upon the whole friendly. He was clearly desirous not to do anything that would embroil him formidably with the authority of England before he had time to reap his harvest of power. All his lessons were not entirely forgotten, but there was still no saying how he would react to the strong wine of administrative and popular control. There was little reason to suppose that his moderation would be proof against so heady a mixture, and the matter was very soon to be put to the test. On January 24 His Majesty accepted the resignation which Yehia Pasha had proffered as soon as the result of the Elections was beyond doubt. On the 27th the King requested Zaghlul Pasha to form a Government, and Zaghlul at a cordial interview accepted the responsibility.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DREADFUL AFTERMATH

THE time was now come when those who had been preparing the Egyptian soil since 1919 might expect to reap the harvest. The constitution was in active being. An Egyptian ministry responsible to no authority but that of the elected representatives of the people had taken over the administration of the country. If the seed had been well sown, the tree of self-government would in its due season bring forth the fruit of goodwill and good sense, and all would be ready for the festival of harvest—the settlement upon an amicable and reasonable basis of the matters reserved under the Declaration of 1922. Almost at the same time that Zaghlul Pasha was taking up the Premiership in Egypt, Mr. MacDonald was taking office in London as the head of the first Labour Government. The evidences, so frequent and so outspoken, of sympathy with Egyptian nationalist aspirations which had been given by the Labour Party could not but encourage Zaghlul to hope that he would get more favourable treatment from the new Government, and that English policy would undergo a marked change. He must have been fortified in this view by Mr. MacDonald's first intervention in Egyptian affairs. There were still suffering punishment in Egypt about 150 persons who had been convicted,

under the martial law régime, of murder, attempted murder, and bomb outrages. Zaghlul asked that all those who had not been convicted of crimes against foreigners might be released. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald brushed aside Zaghlul Pasha's cautious, if unexpected reservation, and promptly replied that all might be released without exception, provided that no danger to public security would result. Subsequently, at the opening of the Egyptian Parliament on March 15, a cordial telegram from the Prime Minister of England was read out, which conveyed hearty good wishes to the "newest of Parliaments". "I believe that Egypt and Great Britain will be tied "by a strong band of friendship, our desire being to "see this bond made stronger on a permanent basis. "For this purpose the Government of His Majesty "the King is ready now, and at any time, to negotiate "with the Egyptian Government". Against this may be set the terms of King Fuad's speech: "You have "before you one of the most grave and delicate tasks "upon which the future of Egypt depends, the task "of realising her complete independence in the true "meaning of the word. . . . My Government is ready "to enter into negotiations, free of all restrictions, with "the British Government, so as to realise our national "aspirations with regard to Egypt and the Sudan." On our side an unreserved and general acceptance of negotiation: on the Egyptian side a rigidly defined statement of their position, a repudiation of all previous negotiations, and a willingness to confer, carefully qualified by a reassertion of nationalist claims, which in regard to the Sudan was particularly brazen. It was a thoroughly bad beginning from our point of view. To display so speedy a desire to bargain was to weaken our position by showing a lack of firmness in

our policy and claims—a mistake which Egypt was careful not to make. Even if we had found it wise to declare our willingness, it was obviously a tactical error to accept the Egyptian proposal before we knew its terms, yet this was what in effect we did.

The situation which at once developed showed the gravity of our error. The attitude which we had adopted had no relation at all to the facts. The new Egyptian Ministry opened without delay a hostile campaign. It decided first of all to refuse to pay to retiring European officials the indemnities due under the Law 28 passed in the previous year. On March 10 Zaghlul Pasha was informing the Residency that he proposed to modify this law and that he did not believe that the British Government would insist upon its strict application. From telegrams of expansive benevolence Mr. MacDonald was at once compelled to turn to grave warnings, the effect of which was of course weakened by his previous attitude. At the same time the Egyptian Ministry had lost no time in attacking British officials even at the expense of efficient administration. The railway administration had deteriorated to a point at which urgent reform was necessary. One British General Manager had already been retired; and his successor, finding that the Minister and his Under-Secretary either ignored or overruled his recommendations for reform, felt that his only course was to resign in his turn. At the same time the Ministry were busily arranging for the retirement in the course of the next three years of practically the whole European staff of the railways, although it was open to the gravest doubt whether Egyptians could be found with sufficient experience and capacity to replace them.

All these symptoms, combined with the references

in the King's Speech to the Sudan, made the British Government much more nervous than they had declared themselves to be in regard to negotiations, and Mr. MacDonald was anxious that, before inviting him to London, the High Commissioner should endeavour to find out how far Zaghlul was prepared to go and upon what lines. It was quite clear, indeed, that if Zaghlul Pasha was going to adhere to his repeated public asseverations, there could not be the least use in negotiation. But it was equally clear to Lord Allenby that the time for approaching Zaghlul in these terms was past: he pointed out that hopes had been built in Egypt upon the advent of a Labour Government to office and that Zaghlul was determined to present his case to them in person. He therefore refused even to consider the idea that Zaghlul would not be reasonably prepared to compromise.<sup>1</sup> Mr. MacDonald wisely replied: "Until I have some indication that his [Zaghlul's] aspirations do not conflict too hopelessly with our irreducible requirements regarding the Sudan and the defence of the Canal in particular, I would be unwilling to ask him to undertake negotiations in London".<sup>2</sup> The High Commissioner still thought that the step which had been taken could not be retraced. "Zaghlul now seems well disposed and inclined to believe in our good faith, but of necessity our relations with him, although good, are still somewhat unstable, and largely depend on our doing nothing calculated to shake his confidence. . . . I do not by any means regard breakdown of negotiations as inevitable, and I hold strongly to the view that the course I propose offers best possible chances of success."<sup>3</sup> The most tender consideration

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, March 31, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. MacDonald to Viscount Allenby, April 3, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Despatch: Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, April 6, 1924.



was still to be shown for Zaghlul, who, by surely the quaintest of mental processes, was now represented to be our only hope in Egypt. He must be coaxed to negotiate by every possible means; to that end Lord Allenby proposed that he should be authorised to tell Zaghlul that if Zaghlul agreed to an offensive and defensive alliance, by which Egypt would become a belligerent in the event of Great Britain finding herself at war, then His Majesty's Government would be willing to discuss the withdrawal of British troops from Cairo and Alexandria, would drop their claim to protect foreigners and minorities, would give Egypt a more effective participation in the administration of the Sudan, and would consider the abolition of the offices of Judicial and Financial Advisers.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing, however, that could be done was likely to prevent the abject failure of the projected negotiations. The Egyptian loves bargaining, he approaches it with the glint of confidence in his eyes, watches his opponent with rapt attention, and, like the natural poker player, has an uncanny instinct in detecting from the slightest movement or expression the innermost thoughts of his adversary. The Englishman, on the other hand, dislikes bargaining and is hampered by the feeling that he is not much good at it. He is half beaten before he starts; his only chance is to make up his mind from the beginning what he wants, and to stick to it with the utmost firmness. His pertinacity may win, where his subtilty will fail: he must at all costs evince no eagerness. These being the rules of the game, we had from the very commencement been displaying a deplorable eagerness to come to terms: we had constantly been stating our irreducible minimum and immediately departing from it. Our

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, April 16, 1924.

one hope of making the 1922 Declaration a successful policy was to entrench ourselves firmly upon it, and wait with all the patience and calmness in the world for the Egyptians to make the first move. Particularly was this true at the moment when Zaghlul, at the head of an extremist party, had just swept the Egyptian board: at such a time it was essential that he should be given no encouragement to "play "politics", but should be left to tackle his administrative responsibilities. By his success or failure in dealing with those problems his true merit would be exposed to his countrymen: and for us would be acquired valuable information as to the capacity of Egypt to settle down into a reasonable common-sense frame of mind.

The conflict of opinion which was now becoming apparent between Cairo and Whitehall was inevitably resolved in favour of the High Commissioner's view. Not only were there strong arguments to support his proposition that the implications of Labour's declared policy could not be shirked, but Mr. MacDonald himself was now too far committed to negotiation. At any rate Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, at the beginning of April, sent a personal invitation to Zaghlul Pasha to discuss matters with him in London towards the end of June or beginning of July, although he informed the High Commissioner at the same time that he must not discuss concessions with the Pasha, and "must on no account initiate proposals".<sup>1</sup>

On April 18 Corporal Ryan of the Royal Air Force was murdered at Heliopolis; Egyptian opinion was clearly horrified by this renewal of political outrages, and as one of the murderers was caught red-handed, it was to be hoped that punishment would follow

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. MacDonald to Viscount Allenby, April 14, 1924.

swiftly upon the crime. That a further series of these brutal and senseless murders should break out was a consummation that could hardly be wished for by any party in Egyptian politics: and although there was some anxiety felt in regard to the state of public order, it was generally hoped and thought that Corporal Ryan's murder was merely a long-delayed result of an inflammation which was now subsiding. It could not unfortunately be concluded, however, that hostility to the British was also on the wane. Hard upon the retirement of Mr. Verschoyle, the British General Manager of the Railways, and the attempted attack upon the indemnities of European officials, came a decision of the Cabinet to amalgamate the Budgets of the Financial and Judicial Advisers with the Budgets of their respective Ministries; a first step towards the abolition of these officers' power of effective intervention. Not one of these incidents seems to have shaken Lord Allenby's faith in the success of negotiations with Zaghlul; throughout the end of April and the beginning of May he was constantly telegraphing to the Prime Minister London in reassuring reports of Zaghlul's good intentions and varied suggestions for calming the Pasha's over-sensitive reactions to rumours of the British Government's attitude.<sup>1</sup> "I realise how irksome he is, and it is quite "possible he is hoping to manœuvre His Majesty's "Government into taking their stand less firmly on the "Declaration, but I trust it may be possible to make "some statement which may suffice to reassure him."<sup>2</sup> All this backing and filling on the part of Zaghlul was of course designed to produce if possible some recession on the part of England from the 1922 De-

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, May 3, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Despatch: Viscount Allenby to Mr. MacDonald, May 23, 1924.

claration. If we were so anxious for negotiation as we had shown ourselves, perhaps by holding off, he might have induced us, in our eagerness, to make some move to his advantage. Mr. MacDonald was, however, fortunately alive to the possibilities, and he told the High Commissioner in dignified and impressive language quite definitely that for the present he had had enough. "The position of Great Britain in Egypt, whatever Egyptians may try to make out, is juridically and internationally perfectly legal. Egypt was *de jure* and *de facto* a British protectorate. For reasons of their own and of their own motion His Majesty's Government modified that status and granted a measure of independence. His Majesty's Government alone were able or had the right to do this, and Egyptian independence, so far as it exists, is the direct consequence of action of His Majesty's Government. . . . The chief advantage of negotiating with Zaghulul lies in the probability that an agreement accepted by him would be endorsed by Egypt. . . . Unless this question can be answered in the affirmative, the advantages of negotiating with Zaghulul are largely discounted. If, however, an affirmative reply can be given, the obvious inference is that Zaghulul is exaggerating his difficulties with the double object (a) of contracting something, which in the event of failure of negotiations, he could represent as an admission that without Egyptian recognition the Declaration of 1922 is ineffective, (b) of making His Majesty's Government appear as the party who are striving at all costs to promote the negotiations in order to legalise an otherwise untenable position."<sup>1</sup>

This was a very refreshing though tardy recognition of the facts, and a lucid appreciation of the

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. MacDonald to Viscount Allenby, May 30, 1924.

real meaning of Zaghlul's manoeuvres. It was of course quite useless, as the Prime Minister was already suspecting, to negotiate with him, but unfortunately the invitation had already been received and accepted.

Meanwhile another dangerous situation had arisen as the result of the uncertainty to which our policy of hurried negotiation had given rise. On May 8 the Governor-General of the Sudan reported to the High Commissioner that a considerable increase in Egyptian propaganda was taking place in that country, which was having its effect in the larger towns of the north, and uttered a warning that definite steps might have to be taken to counteract these subversive activities. His warning was soon justified. In the middle of June there was rioting at Omdurman as a direct result of political demonstration organised by Egyptian agitators. Although the situation was now becoming grave, the Egyptian Government proceeded to demonstrate their entire lack of any sense of responsibility by telegraphing at this point ridiculous protests to London and Khartoum against what they were pleased to call the attempts of British officials to foment an artificial separatist movement in the Sudan. A firm statement on June 25 in the House of Lords that the British Government had no intention "to abandon the Sudan in any sense whatever" came as usual too late: the atmosphere remained violently disturbed in Omdurman and Khartoum, and demonstrations continued to take place, although Lord Allenby was able to furnish evidence to London which left little doubt that the Watanist and Zaghlulist parties were providing both inspiration and financial support. At the beginning of August there was a more serious development, when the cadets of

the military school at Khartoum paraded the town and threatened to resist their disarmament; while at the same time the Egyptian railway battalion at Atbara got out of hand and order had to be restored by rifle-fire from the Arab mounted infantry. Having done nothing to discourage but having actively connived at Egyptian subversive activities in the Sudan, Zaghlul's Government now took a further step and published a communique which allowed the inference to be drawn that the firing at Atbara had been carried out by British troops. They then adopted a very grave tone with the British Government and shook their heads over the serious effect this might have in Egypt.

Truly, the record of their hostility, unreason, and irresponsibility was becoming more than any civilised government could endure. In addition to the grave infringements of the *status quo*, and their flagrant disregard of engagements entered into by their country, which have already been described, the Council of Ministers was now proposing to strike out of the Budget the annual subvention of the army of occupation upon which the Egyptian Government had decided in 1907, and to discontinue the service of the Ottoman Loans secured upon the Egyptian tribute. On June 25 the Egyptian Government did actually default in regard to the former payment. On June 26 the Senate passed a Resolution protesting against the statement of Sudanese policy made in the House of Lords, and Zaghlul made an interesting admission in the Chamber of Deputies when he said that this statement showed that, contrary to expectation, the attitude of the British had not been modified by the advent of a Labour Government. He followed this up by talking of the futility of negotiation,

and then made one of his spectacular resignations. It was a poor bluff, which he employed on subsequent occasions also, solely intended to improve his personal position among the less acute of his followers. His administration had done nothing of real internal value, having been chiefly preoccupied with finding posts for its political supporters: the Legislature too, apart from its heated excursions into external politics, had done nothing but vote to its members a salary of £500 per annum on account of the high cost of living. With such a record behind him, and undeterred by an attempt—apparently Watanist—to murder him, Zaghlul left for England on July 25 for the purpose of negotiating an amicable and reasonable agreement with the British Government. The negotiations which took place with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in London were as utterly farcical as might have been expected. They did not commence until September 25, for Zaghlul Pasha proceeded first to Paris, from which point of vantage there ensued another series of skirmishing letters between himself and Mr. MacDonald, at one point of which the Egyptian representative called off negotiations finally. After this finesse the parties met and indulged in a certain amount of ineffective recrimination upon the minor incidents of recent history. "Discussion of a preliminary nature" had taken place. At the next meeting Zaghlul stated his wants: withdrawal of the British Army from Egypt and of the Financial and Judicial Advisers; disappearance of every vestige of British control, and that His Majesty's Government should drop their claim to protect foreigners, minorities, and the Suez Canal. That, he said, was all he could think of for the moment in regard to Egypt. "A further conversation" had taken place. On October 3 Zaghlul

reiterated his wants in greater detail. British troops could protect the Suez Canal from Palestine, but he would not hear of their being on Egyptian soil upon any terms, and he could not understand how Great Britain could claim any right to protect the Canal. "Conversations were concluded. Zaghlul Pasha is "returning shortly to Egypt in view of the inclement "weather."

The whole affair had indeed degenerated into farce. But such grotesque antics were not to occupy the stage for long; the grim figure of tragedy was already approaching from the wings. For the moment, however, Zaghlul Pasha was free to continue his heedless posturing. He returned to Cairo at the end of October, and on November 15 staged a trial of strength with King Fuad. He forced His Majesty's surrender by resignation accompanied by serious and avowed preparations for disorderly demonstrations against His Majesty's throne and person. He gained his immediate object but did his cause much harm by this ill-judged action. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government had left office at the end of October and had been succeeded by a Conservative Ministry, with Mr. Austen Chamberlain at the Foreign Office. Mr. MacDonald had been considering, with the support of the High Commissioner, the making of a representation to the Egyptian Government upon the subject of their repeated infringements of the *status quo*, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain forthwith continued the discussion with Cairo as to the form such a representation should take. All the while such infringements were increasing: the last being Zaghlul's refusal on November 18 to allow the post of Judicial Adviser to continue, or to renew the contract of the incumbent, Sir M. Amos.



On the following day occurred a crime so senseless and so directly arising out of the persistent behaviour of the Egyptian Government that it could not fail violently to affect the minds of those in authority. Soon after midday on November 19 Sir Lee Stack, Sirdar of the Egyptian Army and Governor-General of the Sudan, was driving away from the Ministry of War in Cairo. As his car was drawing near the Ministry of Education, several persons dressed as effendis attacked it with revolvers, mortally wounding Sir Lee Stack, escaping afterwards in motor-cars which were waiting for them. The Sirdar was taken to the Residency, where he died the following night. The crime was not an isolated one; it was rather the dramatic culmination of the campaign of hatred of Great Britain which had been fomented by Egyptian politicians for so long. That campaign Zaghlul Pasha had often incited when in opposition: and finally, when he had assumed responsibility for the government of Egypt, he had done nothing officially to discourage it. It must be remembered that his Government had, ever since its inception, been making the question of the Sudan the burning political question of the moment, and Sir Lee Stack was Governor-General of the Sudan. Zaghlul Pasha had himself declared in public speeches that the presence of a British Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army was an insult to the independence of Egypt, and Sir Lee Stack was Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army. The crime was as nearly as possible directly attributable to the incitement of the Prime Minister of Egypt, who, not content with such incitement, had been filling high administrative posts with men from among his supporters who were strongly suspected of complicity

in previous murderous assaults upon Englishmen. It was only natural that with his colleague and countryman dying in his house, with the remembrance of all that Egypt owed to Englishmen fresh in his mind, this dreadful evidence of the utterly irresponsible wilfulness of an independent Egypt should act with violence upon Lord Allenby's mind. He proposed at once that Egypt should be taught a stern lesson. "The spirit of indiscipline and hatred which the Egyptian Government have incited by public speeches and through the activities of their Wafd cannot but be regarded as contributory to the crime." He proposed to demand an apology, the punishment of the assailants, the payment of half a million pounds as indemnity, and that the Egyptian Government should agree to an unlimited increase of the area in the Sudan to be irrigated under the Gezira scheme, and to meet the wishes of Great Britain in regard to the future employment of European officials. Such was his immediate reaction, but the Secretary of State was not at once convinced of the wisdom of all these demands. He pointed out that, in addition to a full apology and the punishment of the guilty, what the British Government required were measures by the Egyptian Government that would ensure the cessation of these dastardly outrages. Indemnity he regarded as unnecessary and unimportant, but he was of the opinion that the removal of Egyptian units and Egyptian officers from the Sudan should be demanded. Before, however, these conflicting views could be reconciled, Lord Allenby had anticipated the sanction of the Cabinet and presented his demands to the Egyptian Government. His motive was the fear that Zaghlul might have time to make another resignation—this time effective—before he was

brought to book and responsibility fastened upon him, The communication, unauthorised by the British Government, presented by the High Commissioner to the Prime Minister of Egypt, ran as follows: "The Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, who was also a distinguished officer of the British Army, has been brutally murdered in Cairo. His Majesty's Government consider that this murder, which holds up Egypt as at present governed to the contempt of civilised peoples, is the natural outcome of a campaign of hostility to British rights and British subjects in Egypt and Sudan, founded upon a heedless ingratitude for benefits conferred by Great Britain, not discouraged by Your Excellency's Government and fomented by organisations in close contact with that Government. Your Excellency was warned by His Majesty's Government little more than a month ago of the consequences of failing to stop this campaign more particularly as far as it concerned the Sudan. It has not been stopped. The Egyptian Government have now allowed the Governor-General of the Sudan to be murdered, and have proved that they are incapable or unwilling to protect foreign lives. His Majesty's Government therefore require that the Egyptian Government shall

"(1) Present ample apology for the crime.

"(2) Prosecute enquiry into the authorship of the crime with the utmost energy and without respect of persons, and bring the criminals, whoever they are, and whatever their age, to condign punishment.

"(3) Henceforth forbid and vigorously suppress all popular political demonstrations.

- “(4) Pay forthwith to His Majesty’s Government  
“a fine of £500,000.
- “(5) Order within 24 hours the withdrawal from  
“the Sudan of all Egyptian officers, and the  
“purely Egyptian units of the Sudan army  
“with such resulting changes as shall be  
“hereafter specified.
- “(6) Notify the competent Department that the  
“Sudan Government will increase the area  
“to be irrigated at Gezira from 300,000 fed-  
“dans to an unlimited figure as need may  
“arise.
- “(7) Withdraw all opposition in the respects here-  
“after specified to the wishes of His Majesty’s  
“Government concerning the protection of  
“foreign interests in Egypt.

“Failing immediate compliance with these demands,  
“His Majesty’s Government will at once take appro-  
“priate action to safeguard their interests in Egypt  
“and the Sudan.”

A second immediately following communication set out the specific requirements to which reference had been made. The Sudanese units of the Egyptian Army to be made into a Sudan defence force, owing allegiance to the Sudan Government alone: rules relating to the service, discipline, and retirement of foreign officials still employed by the Egyptian Government and financial conditions governing pensions of foreign officials already retired to be revised in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty’s Government. The posts of Financial and Judicial Advisers and the European Department of the Interior to be maintained with status and powers intact pending the conclusion of an agreement between the two Govern-

ments on the question of the protection of foreign interests. These two communications were handed to the Prime Minister at 5 P.M. on November 23, and meanwhile the Cabinet in London were deliberating upon the terms of an ultimatum which had in fact already been delivered. Their decision, by this time valueless, was telegraphed the same evening to Cairo and contained the following requirements:

- (1) Apology.
- (2) Punishment.
- (3) In order that the rights reserved to His Majesty's Government under the Declaration of February 28, 1922, shall be secured, and that the peaceful development and the welfare of the inhabitants of the Sudan shall in future be protected from subversive activities of Egyptian origin, all Egyptian officers and units to be withdrawn from Sudan.
- (4) Remaining units to be constituted into a Sudan defence force under the Governor-General.
- (5) Annual payment of £1 million by Egypt in respect of the services rendered by the Sudan defence force.
- (6) Undertaking to appoint as Governor-General the nominee of His Majesty's Government.
- (7) Agreement to such extension of Gezira irrigation as may be considered possible without detriment to Egypt by a technical commission containing a member appointed by the Egyptian Government.
- (8) The maintenance of the posts of Financial and Judicial Advisers and preservation of their powers and privileges as existing on March 1, 1922: also respect for the status and present

attributes of the European Department of the Interior and for the recommendations of the Director-General.

This note which the Cabinet decided upon omitted the indemnity as well as the question of service and retirement of foreign officials. It considerably softened the Gezira demand, and made the remaining demands much more logical and coherent. Lord Allenby explained the precipitancy of his action upon three grounds: (1) of Zaghul's impending resignation; (2) because Egyptian opinion was prepared for severe measures at the moment, but was likely very rapidly to become less so as the first shock of the murder passed off; (3) because the foreign colonies were very much excited and were being increasingly worked up by the foreign Press, and there was reason to fear from them hostile demonstrations against Egyptians and against His Majesty's Government. The delay would, as a matter of fact, have been one in any case rather of hours than of days, but the High Commissioner was indeed the only person who could accurately estimate the degree of urgency. The courage and capacity for swift decision which he displayed were beyond praise: and these are qualities which are apt to be undervalued by those in the safe and sequestered atmosphere of Whitehall, who have never experienced the heat and burden of Egyptian conditions, or felt the strain of desperate issues encountered daily face to face. In regard to the difference between his terms and the Cabinet's, Lord Allenby held the opinion that the infliction of an indemnity and the increase of the Gezira irrigation in the Sudan were essential, in order to bring home to Egyptians at large the gravity of the crime and the fact that the

British Government still possessed both the power and the will to strike effectively in a just cause. The fact might, it is true, very easily have been lost sight of in the events of the last few years, and it was good that Egypt should be vividly reminded of it. But in regard to the method employed the question was on a more doubtful footing. As the Secretary of State had pointed out, what Great Britain required was an effective assurance that the activities that had caused the crime should cease. Neither the indemnity nor the attempt to force agreement in regard to Gezira would contribute in any way to this end: and both therefore would have the appearance, if not in Egypt, to the world at large, of an unnecessary assertion of dominant power. Moreover, any punitive action in regard to Gezira would certainly hit those people—the fellaheen—upon whom no responsibility, direct or indirect, for the crime could justly be fastened; whose interests, moreover, it was our foremost duty to regard, and whose support was essential to our case. Swift punishment of the offenders and a full apology were essential: of that there was no doubt. For the rest the crux of the whole problem was the Sudan, and Egypt's attitude and behaviour towards it. That Egyptian troops and disaffected officials should be withdrawn from that country was a step which was fully justified by the circumstances of the crime, and was, moreover, urgently demanded in the interests of the Sudan itself: and it was perfectly proper that the Egyptian Government should be compelled to signify its recognition of the Sudan condominium, and of its instrument the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1887 under penalty of such actions as England might think fit to take there. The Sudan cry was in truth insincere and false, an inven-

tion of political agitation, which had no real meaning and was producing terrible results. No Egyptian who could make a living in Egypt or elsewhere had any desire to go to the Sudan, or any interest in the fate of the Sudanese: their one concern was the assurance of their water supply, as to which they had no real misgivings. The Sudanese for their part hated the Egyptians and had no desire to be affiliated to them. The Sudanese schoolboy who was asked to compose an essay on railways voiced a national opinion when he wrote tersely: "Railways are accursed of God: they 'allow the Egyptians to come to our country'".

For good or for ill, however, Lord Allenby's ultimatum went forth; and all that remained was to await the Egyptian reply. This was received the next day and followed the lines that might have been anticipated. It expressed without reserve a full measure of horror at the crime, but no symptom of any realisation that the Government shared responsibility for the commission of such a crime upon Egyptian soil. Apology, punishment, and indemnity it would agree to: but it lightly declared that it would not accept any other of the suggestions made for protecting the peace and welfare of the Sudan and the security of foreign lives in Egypt. The High Commissioner acted with promptitude upon receipt of this childish irresponsible reply, and informed the Egyptian Government that instructions were being issued at once for the withdrawal of Egyptian officers and units from the Sudan and giving full liberty to the Sudan Government to increase the area to be irrigated at Gezira. He also proposed for the consideration of His Majesty's Government the seizure of the tobacco customs, and an imposing naval and military display, coupled with the rupture of diplo-



matic relations. He further suggested that hostages should be taken and that they should be shot if the murders continued. It is somewhat difficult to understand the purport of the last two of these proposals. The seizure of the customs, which was in fact carried out—again without authorisation from England—did at least provide a visible proof of determination and at the same time a source of revenue which could be employed in satisfaction of the requirement relating to officials. But the rupture of diplomatic relations would be ineffective unless we were prepared to follow it by a declaration of war, and a declaration of war could obviously not be contemplated. We had in fact landed ourselves as a result of our policy in a position that was weak to the verge of bankruptcy, and the fact was clearly demonstrated by the suggestion in regard to hostages. That was a counsel of wild despair; if we could not prevent the killing of innocent Europeans, except by the killing of innocent Egyptians, we had indeed reached the last stage of powerless ineptitude. Had we in fact still the power to control the situation? Let us suppose that the Egyptian Government had remained in office and maintained its refusal to accept our demands. In such a case what step could we have taken to enforce them? We already had an army in occupation of Egypt, and we could have reinforced that army and taken over the administration of the country, rescinding the Declaration of Independence. Did the Government of Great Britain seriously contemplate such a step? And, if not, what other effective action was possible? The dilemma was novel and unpleasant, and we were lucky to be saved from it by Zaghul's resignation. Fortunately for us at this crisis his courage deserted him. He was harassed by fears for his personal safety

and was anticipating arrest and even condign punishment. On the 24th his resignation became definite and Ahmed Ziwari Pasha was invited to form a Ministry in his place.

For the moment, therefore, our difficulties were eased. The further troubles in the Sudan will be described elsewhere. In Egypt the question now to be decided was what policy to pursue in relation to the new *Cabinet d'affaires* which had succeeded Zaghul Pasha. The situation was temporarily quiet enough, with most of the schoolboys—Zaghul's army—on strike, but none of our important demands had as yet been accepted and the customs were still in our occupation.

Both the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State appear to have breathed a sigh of relief at the turn affairs had taken at Zaghul's resignation, and to have welcomed the event as a heaven-sent opportunity to extricate themselves from a thoroughly unpleasant situation. They agreed that much might be expected from the new Ministry and that they must adopt towards it an attitude characterised by benevolent goodwill. Ziwari Pasha was accordingly informed that the Customs would be evacuated, if his Government would agree: (1) to maintain the autonomy of the Financial and Judicial Advisers in respect of their budgets; (2) to accept the Financial Adviser's advice in respect of cases of substantial difference of opinion as to conditions of retirement or service of any foreign officials; (3) to pay foreign pensions at favourable rate of exchange; (4) to accept certain other changes operating generally to the material advantage of European officials. These conditions were a substantial recession from the original demands and were accepted without much difficulty,

and the Customs were accordingly evacuated on December 2.

But the rest of our demands were still awaiting settlement. Very little was being done in regard to the investigation of the crime. The only arrests so far made had been carried out by the British military authority—Nekrashi Bey, Makram Obeid, and Abdel Rahman Fahmy, of whom it was reported that they had sworn an oath that they would continue the murder of Europeans, were by these means confined in the Citadel. The Prime Minister had actually refused to arrest them himself, but afterwards agreed to take them over, and also to make a number of other preventive arrests. All this, however, was getting no nearer to punishment of the murderers of the Sirdar, and had it not been for the presence and the detective ability of the British police officers, it is very unlikely that the murderers would have been brought to justice. As to the Sudan, the withdrawal of Egyptian officers and units was carried to a successful conclusion, but the Gezira demand was gradually and inevitably transformed into a proposal to settle the water question by means of a Commission presided over by a neutral chairman, and having an Egyptian representative as one of its members. The Water Commission was presided over by Mr. Carter Cremers, and should have reported on June 30, but owing to Mr. Cremer's illness in the spring it had to adjourn its labours until the autumn without submitting a report.

The question of the appointment of a Sirdar of the Egyptian Army ended in a manner curiously humiliating to us. The independence of Egypt had made it essential to separate the two posts of Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar, which had hitherto

been held by one officer. The Sudan defence force had now been constituted and it was accordingly essential to decide who should be appointed to the Sirdarship of the Egyptian Army. Lord Allenby thought<sup>1</sup> that an Egyptian Sirdar should be appointed, on the ground that such a step would accord with the 1922 policy, and that no objectionable developments were seriously likely to result. It is hardly necessary to point out that such a proposal conflicted fundamentally with the 1922 Declaration. Finally it was decided to leave the appointment in abeyance. The murder of Sir Lee Stack had thus, if it had not yet secured an Egyptian Sirdar, at least, done away with a British Sirdar very successfully.

As to foreign officials, the conditions laid down by the British Government and accepted by the Egyptian Government had the effect of providing them with a new opportunity to fix, if they wished, the date of their retirement, and thereafter to re-engage upon a contract basis in the service of the Egyptian Government. The matter was entirely one for officials themselves to decide in their own interests. The result was cataclysmic, and would have sadly surprised the prophets of the Milner Mission. Out of a total of 1051 officials 740 took the opportunity thus presented to them. Whereas under previous arrangements 134 officials were due to retire in 1925, that year would now see the retirement of 793: and whereas 832 officials had originally opted to remain until 1927, now only 171 would remain until that date. Five years from the inauguration of the new policy would see the end of the European officials, if steps were not taken to prevent this consummation.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Allenby to Mr. Austen Chamberlain, February 12, 1925.

The story of the investigation into the crime is thrilling enough to satisfy even the modern taste, and in its police stages was brought by British efforts to an extremely successful conclusion. Its hero is a former Egyptian student who in 1915 had been induced by agitators, of whom he was the dupe, to attempt the life of King Hussein. For ten years he worked out his resulting sentence in the stone quarries of Tura, and refused to say a word which could implicate his tutors in crime. But his thoughts were always of revenge, and when at last he was released under the amnesty of 1923 he had had an unforgettable lesson. While he had run the risk and suffered the penalty, the men whose tool he had been had taken no risk and undergone no suffering but had reaped all the reward. He came out of prison knowing full well who was responsible for his sufferings and determined upon revenge. By a stroke of genius the police got into touch with him and managed by patient handling to win his confidence. His plan was to win the confidence of the murder gang, and to pose as burning to avenge upon the British the hardships of his sentence. But time could not be lost: a very daring plan was therefore decided upon in order to secure a confession from one of the gang. For this purpose the weakest member of the gang was selected; the idea being to frighten him into deciding to run away, to catch him in the act and secure a confession from his panic. Very wisely it was decided that the way to frighten him was to arrest two of his comrades, of whom it was known that they were ring-leaders. All went smoothly: the frightened conspirator, whose nerves were played upon by the police, decided to bolt for Cyrenaica and was neatly scooped up in the desert. At that point his terror was too

much for him and he gave vent to a long and detailed confession as a result of which it was possible to put on trial eight of those concerned in the murder, seven of whom were sentenced to death on June 7, 1925. Better still, evidence of substance was at last secured against the two members of the Wafd, Ahmed Maher and Nekrashi, whom Zaghlul had honoured in spite of their complicity.

The seven murderers of Sir Lee Stack were executed in August 1925, and at that date the fate of our ultimatum to Egypt stood as follows: Of the seven demands we had made upon her the first and the fourth relating to an apology and a fine alone had been complied with, and they were from any point the least important: the fifth relating to the withdrawal of Egyptian units from the Sudan had been refused and subsequently carried out by us: the demand in regard to irrigation at Gezira had been so transformed that it ceased to have any relevance to the questions of reparation or punishment: the demand for the suppression of political demonstrations had, with the change of government, lost its intended meaning: and the demands made with a view to the protection of foreign interests had been in some important respects substantially modified, and in other respects had resulted in a sudden and serious diminution in the number of foreign officials employed. There remained only the demand for punishment of the murderers; seven of them had, owing to brilliant detective work by the British police, no longer hampered by the departments of government concerned, been arrested and executed. But a miscarriage of Egyptian justice did, as we shall see, result in the escape of one of those who most deserved that an exemplary penalty should be exacted from him.

Meanwhile cold-blooded murder had succeeded in securing one of the principal objects of our enemies—the post of Sirdar of the Egyptian Army was no longer to be filled by a British officer. As far as Egypt was concerned, once again she had been allowed to escape the consequences of her folly and her crime. Once again she had been allowed to believe that our anger was but sound and fury, and could be provoked with impunity, and once again the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN AUTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

WE must now return to the chronicle of events following upon the resignation of Zaghlul and the formation of Ahmed Ziwar Pasha's Ministry. Ziwar Pasha possessed the happy exuberance of spirit which does not stop to count costs, and feels itself fully equal to difficulties not fully understood. He was a "jolly fellow", a *bon viveur*, with the qualities and defects of that temperament; sometimes indiscreet and disinclined for concentrated work, but of a great courage, and of infinite resource. His colleagues in the Ministry were not all of them of a calibre to afford him much assistance, but they could at least be expected to be generally obedient to his orders: he himself was determined to work in friendly co-operation with His Majesty's Government, and he set about his task with commendable courage and promptitude. But though he might be successful in his external dealings, it was soon clear that he had not quite the concentration necessary to counter his internal opponents in open warfare. He himself realised this and suggested to the King that for the purpose of combating the Wafd the Cabinet should be strengthened by the inclusion of some able member of the Constitutional Liberal Party. Ismail Sidky Pasha agreed to join,



and a better selection could not have been made, for there was no more able or determined political fighter in Egypt. He joined the Ministry on December 9, and it was significant of Ziwar Pasha's courage and resource that he allocated to this able colleague the Portfolio of the Interior almost invariably held by the Prime Minister himself. Sidky Pasha at once set about his task, rearranging the appointments of Mudirs, reinstating Omdehs who had been dismissed by Zaghlul, and making his weight felt throughout the department. On December 24 Parliament was dissolved. The stage was thus set for the new elections and the critical battle between Sidky Pasha and the forces of Zaghlulism. The contestants were possibly more evenly matched than at the time of the previous elections, for the strength of Zaghlul was, at any rate in some quarters, sensibly diminished. His period of administration had estranged from him a great deal of the support of officials, who were incensed at his shameless favouritism of political supporters: by its inefficiency it had seriously weakened the hold previously obtaining over the more substantial classes throughout the country. His ill-conceived and ill-managed attempt to diminish King Fuad's authority in November had done him no good and had lost him a number of the members of his own party: and finally his personal prestige had suffered much from the events following the Sirdar's murder. His plainly evidenced fears for his personal safety, his panic lest he should be arrested and even hanged, and his hasty resignation without attempting to shoulder his responsibilities, were not incidents which could be said to adorn a leader's reputation. But, of course, there still remained the immense force of the "Zaghlul tradition". In the popular mind an almost super-

stitious belief existed that Saad Zaghlul was bound to return to power, and fear and sycophancy rendered that belief a very potent political asset. To destroy this superstition was the task to which Sidky Pasha wisely bent all his energies. The powerful motives of fear, revenge, and hatred ranged behind him not only the King, but the Government, the Liberal Constitutional and the Nationalist parties. The King was already busily organising a new political party—the Ittehad, or Party of Union—so obviously associated with the Palace that it came to be popularly known as the Hisb-el-Malek. The Government from this aspect was for all practical purposes Sidky Pasha himself, who, given a free hand at the Ministry of the Interior, could do more than anybody else to bring to naught the political campaigns of the Wafd. But from the Liberals he could never expect anything but passive support. They confined their active political life to Cairo, took no pains to create an organisation in the provinces, and allowed the Wafd always to get before them with its collection of resources, its widespread propaganda, and its ceaseless political activity. The real question was whether Sidky, armed with the powers of the Minister of the Interior—powers which he could be trusted to use to the full—would carry the day against Saad Zaghlul. That the latter was anxious and uncertain was soon made clear. He had shown his republican hand very clearly in November, yet now he was forced by political anxieties to profess a devout loyalty to the Throne. He was even compelled by his fears to make persistent overtures to the High Commissioner—overtures in which he hinted not darkly at the dangers of autocracy and sought alliance with the British to guard against them. So matters proceeded until the Elections, which resulted finally in

a draw which both sides claimed as a victory. The question was decided in favour of the Zaghlulists by the voting in the Chamber for the presidential candidates, when Zaghlul Pasha himself secured a decisive victory over Sarwat Pasha, the Government candidate. Thereupon the Ministry, much to the surprise and disappointment of the Wafd, resigned. The King, as the Ministers fully expected, refused to accept their resignation and dissolved Parliament forthwith on March 24, 1925.

All these events left the King firmly in the saddle with a Ministry upon whose obedience—Sidky Pasha always excepted—he might fairly count. The recent elections had demonstrated forcibly enough that in present conditions it could hardly be hoped to inflict a decisive electoral defeat upon the Wafd. The only chance of success was a revision of the electoral law; and to this project the Ministry turned with relief. The necessary preparation would take time, the possibility of further elections would be postponed, and the effects of Sidky Pasha's administration of the Interior would have time to make their impression. Sidky Pasha had certainly already shown a marked degree of strength and ability, the students for the first time for many years were attending quietly to their studies, disorders were an infrequent instead of a daily occurrence, crime was decreasing, and the standard of efficiency everywhere improving.

In such a superficially tranquil atmosphere, after six stormy years of office, Lord Allenby gave up his post of High Commissioner. He left Egypt in June accompanied by remarkable demonstrations of widespread affection, not only from his personal friends and from the Cairene population, but from all classes throughout Egypt—a well-deserved tribute to an up-

right and generous personality. There was no doubt that political Egypt owed him a debt—it was his hand that had procured for her the measure of independence she now enjoyed. Although the policy of concession and of treaty had been initiated by the Milner Mission, it was Lord Allenby who had insisted that the British Government should accept all the implications of that policy and carry it to its logical conclusion. To the close student of his times it may well seem that he reposed in Egyptians a confidence far greater and more complete than did the Members of the Mission. He was ready to go much further than they were in removing safeguards and restrictions; and his determination carried the day against the doubts and hesitations which were entertained in higher quarters. It must have required more than ordinary courage to persist in the course upon which he had decided, in face of the dreadful proofs of instability and fanaticism which Egyptians were almost daily furnishing. Yet he maintained his course unswerving almost to the end, and Egypt, who had time and again repaid his confidence with the murder of his countrymen and had never been moved to a generosity corresponding to his, did well at his departure to signify some measure of recognition. But if her heart was touched, it was not for long: the absorbing pursuit of politics now claimed all her attention; and her politicians did not allow her grateful sentiments to interfere for long with her hostility to British interests and claims.

Ziwar Pasha left shortly afterwards for a visit to Europe, and Yehia Pasha Ibrahim, the founder of the Constitution and a member of the Ittehad Party, was deputed to act for him as Prime Minister. Sidky Pasha followed him not long afterwards: he was, as

at present arranged, designated to represent Egypt in the frontier negotiations with Italy, and was to proceed in due course to Rome for this purpose. Meanwhile the Cabinet remained, on paper at any rate, a Coalition of Ittehadists and Liberals. In this coalition Sidky Pasha, who was a Liberal and called himself an Independent, occupied an indeterminate but supremely important position. Under this Ministry the country's affairs were proceeding smoothly enough, when most unfortunately—and, as it turned out, quite wrongly—the King and his confidential adviser, Nashaat Pasha, decided that the time had come when they could dispense with external, and particularly with Liberal, support and make the Ittehad party supreme in isolation. The opportunity to take this step—disastrous as it ultimately proved—was afforded by a personal and in itself unimportant quarrel between the acting Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice, Abdel Aziz Fahmy—a quarrel skilfully fomented with the deliberate desire that the other Liberal Ministers and Sidky Pasha should resign as a result. This in fact they did and the Ministry was reconstituted in August on a purely Palace basis, while the Prime Minister, who after a pleasant visit to London was now enjoying the seductive pleasures of Evian-les-bains, sent soothing telegrams belittling the importance of the matter. Sidky Pasha was induced to remain in charge of the Italian negotiations, and there was a tendency to believe that nothing serious had really happened. But in point of fact this incident, besides being the direct cause of the restoration to power of the fallen Wafd, was the origin of difficulties that were to take years to heal. It meant indeed that all our troubles were to begin all over again, for it seriously upset the balance of power.

In order fully to understand the implications of this disastrous mistake it is necessary to review the situation which had been created by the withdrawal of British control from the internal administration of Egypt. What those who had advocated this withdrawal had hoped to see result from it was a friendly and reasonable Egyptian Government drawing its power from popular support. Such a result was indeed the only one which would enable us to procure a final settlement of the Egyptian question, and to limit our intervention in Egypt solely to the prevention of clear breaches of a definite agreement. But even the happenings of the last eighteen months had made it plain, and the years to come were to make it plainer still, that a Government composed of moderate elements and based upon popular support was the last result that would be attained by our action. There were only two alternatives possible in the existing state of Egypt. The first was the government of the Wafd, which could compel the suffrages of an ignorant electorate, but showed no quality of reasonableness or foresight. Such a Government had come into existence as the result of the first elections and there had followed the utter destruction of all hopes of a reasonable Anglo-Egyptian settlement. What is more, the poisonous seeds of political agitation had been implanted in the Sudan, and finally a state of serious disorder in Egypt had culminated in the murder of the Sirdar. Clearly we must in the interest of the three countries concerned intervene to prevent the reappearance of a purely Zaghulist administration.

The other alternative was a government based upon the autocratic power of the King—such a government would derive its strength from causes which

still operate strongly in Eastern countries; the tradition of subservience to the throne; the means which the King held, as the fount of grades and decorations, to secure the support of a people who still set much store by such things; his wealth; and, most important from our point of view the presence in the country of British troops as the final defence against revolution. But such a government would secure no popular support, and could only exist—as it now existed—by the virtual abrogation of the constitution. On the other hand the memory of autocratic misrule and oppression was not dead, and therefore the cry of danger to the constitution was the one cry which could unite all the political elements in Egypt, and to resist such danger they were still prepared to go to any lengths. From the British point of view it need hardly be pointed out that both our past and our present policy would be rendered utterly fruitless by the appearance, at this stage, of autocratic government in Egypt, when the democratic constitution which was our declared goal had hardly yet come into being, and while we, both in popular repute and, in fact, were still the supreme motive power. So long, therefore, as a balance of power was maintained, so long as all the political parties, or even two parties in coalition, were composing the Government, we need not actively intervene, but the moment that one party gained the upper hand, we were faced with the alternative of either *Zaghlulism* or autocracy. Neither eventuality could be contemplated and our intervention became inevitable. One other lesson was to be learnt from present happenings: that no one of the three contending parties was touched in the slightest with the true spirit of free democratic government. The first concern of each alike was to obtain control; once

obtained, they—each in turn—used it first to consolidate their political position by an unscrupulous use of the weapons which administrative office put into their hands, and then to employ the power thus afforded them for personal ends. Zaghlul Pasha and Sarwat Pasha, as leaders of opposing parties, had acted very much alike in this, and the country fully realised that it had profited from none of them. But what the rank and file feared most of all, with old unhappy memories of Khedive Ismail still in mind, was a return to autocracy. They were sick and tired of political intrigues, of constant unrest and alarms; they were beginning to forget the War, and to recall with regret the good old days of Cromer and Kitchener. The political freedom which Egypt had clamoured for and at length gained was immediately lost from her sight in the dust raised by a sordid struggle for personal power. To His Majesty's Government this situation presented acute difficulties. If the King succeeded in consolidating the position of a Palace Government and postponing elections indefinitely, to what criticism would we, whose army was recognised by all Egyptians to be his support, not be open? If, on the other hand, Zaghlul came off again the victor, what trouble might not ensue in the Nile Valley, and particularly in the already sorely vexed Sudan?

Indeed it was not too much to say that the situation in the Sudan had been brought about entirely by Egyptian agents and by subversive activities, primarily designed to further the aims of the Wafd. Although the country as a whole was not at all disaffected to British rule, but still grateful and contented, there were of course elements which formed a favourable soil for the working of the



agitator. Foremost among these were the Egyptian officials recruited from the politically minded class in Egypt, the Egyptian merchants who wanted a free hand to prey upon the Sudanese, and the Egyptian Army, which, as in Egypt, contained some elements amenable to political propaganda. Among the Sudan's population also a student class was slowly growing up which included a high proportion of half-bred Egyptian-Sudanese and of the specially undependable educated blacks of slave origin. As might have been expected, the early stirrings of political feeling in the Sudan began simultaneously with the trouble in Egypt in 1919, and were confined at first entirely to Egyptians. But it was these Egyptians, allied with members of that "denationalised" class peculiar to the Sudan—men of mixed or slave extraction—who later started the propaganda which resulted in the serious troubles of 1924. That this propaganda was purely subversive and had no genuine national basis is clear from the extreme variety of its forms. It used religion, Sudan for the Sudanese, Sudan for the Egyptians, personal grievances, class dissatisfactions—any cry it could lay hands on; provided only it could stir up disaffection. By 1922 the subversive activities of the Egyptians had organised themselves upon the usual lines of secret political societies, and unimpeachable evidence was later found to show that the centre of these organisations was Cairo, and that it was from Cairo that the promoters received stimulus and inspiration. In 1923 Hafiz Bey Ramadan, leader of the Watanist party in Egypt, visited Khartum and got into personal touch with disaffected Sudanese elements. With the triumph of the Wafd in 1924, these contacts fell into the hands of that party: two leaders in particular

were being employed in Khartum—one Mahomed Tewfik Wahabi, a judge of the Civil Courts, and one a thorough-paced rascal of slave extraction, by name Ali Abdul Latif. The latter was the “Sudanese” leader and his group or organisation was to play the open part, while the Egyptian group was designed to act as organiser and to remain in that congenial spot, the background. In order to give the whole agitation as Sudanese an air as possible, the League of the White Flag was formed of which the Sudanese were “open” and the Egyptian “secret” members, and of which the resources actually came from Egypt, but were announced to derive from Sudanese subscriptions. Its ostensible object was “the Sudan for ‘the Sudanese’”, a sentiment to which no Egyptian ever intended to subscribe, and on this basis it proceeded to organise the disorderly demonstrations which took place in the early summer of 1924. With the arrest, however, of Ali Abdul Latif and others, its activities ceased to be important. None the less it soon became clear that the Egyptian agitators had other strings to their bow; in particular they had for some time been busy spreading subversive propaganda in the army. For this purpose their most effective weapon had been the discharged and pensioned black officers, originating mainly from slave stock, having many of them a grievance, and none of them regular employment. The first definite step taken in this direction was the demonstration by the Cadets’ school in August at Khartum. Fortunately, owing to the tactful action of the authorities, this affair did not develop as its promoters had hoped, although it led to a serious riot in Omdurman. The next outbreak was in the Egyptian Railway Battalion at Atbara, and this was followed by disturbances at Wari and

Malakal. All these clearly were steps leading up to some much more widespread and dangerous conflagration, which might at any moment be started by one of these local disturbances. But the murder of the Sirdar and the drastic orders for removal of the Egyptian units and officers from the Sudan took the agitators by surprise and broke up their plans: and there can be no shadow of doubt that had these activities been allowed to continue, the ignorant and belligerent tribes would before long have been in revolt against authority, and the situation would only have been cleared up at the cost of much suffering and loss of life.

What made the crime of the Egyptian agitators so flagrant, and rendered utterly criminal the almost direct encouragement given by Zaghlul and his obedient Chamber of Deputies, was that as far as Egyptians were concerned their clamour in regard to the Sudan was both insincere and deliberately misleading. They knew beyond doubt that no sympathy existed between Sudanese and Egyptians: that no single Egyptian had any desire to live and work in the Sudan, and that the Sudanese, even the most disaffected, had no wish to be ruled by or allied to Egypt. Ali Abdul Latif himself did not make reference in any one of his propagandist proclamations to any suggestion of an Egyptian administration. All that Egyptians really cared about was the safety of their water-supply, and as to that the reasonable elements among them had never really had serious misgivings. The politicians were using the Sudan agitation simply for their own ulterior motives to keep emotion inflamed against the British, and for this purpose they did not scruple to put in jeopardy the lives of many thousands of innocent Sudanese subjects.

The acting Governor-General of the Sudan and his official advisers felt that one of the principal causes of the mutinies in the Army had been the divided allegiance to which the officers were asked to subscribe under the condominium. "A man cannot serve 'two masters': and now that the strength of the British authority had not only been withdrawn from Egypt but called in question in the Sudan, they felt that there would be no peace until all visible symbols of Egypt's share in the condominium had disappeared. There was indeed an arguable case for taking even more drastic action. The evidence showed perfectly plainly that not only irresponsible politicians in Egypt but the responsible Government of the country by the mouth of its own Prime Minister had refused to recognise the validity of the Convention of 1898. The political party in power had taken a large share in promoting disaffection and disloyalty to the Government which that agreement had established in the Sudan; and the Government of Egypt had directly encouraged that action. Did not this fact alone afford a justification for denouncing the Convention formally, as Egypt had in practice denounced it; and for removing the Sudan once and for all out of the vexed sphere of Egyptian politics? The demands which we had made in regard to the Gezira and to the removal of Egyptian officers and units were in reality tantamount to a recognition that in the present temper of Egypt the condominium could not be worked, and that one member of it must cease to take an active part. But as usual we did not in law take the step which we were taking in fact, and still tried to hide behind a fiction. The Sudan was destined thereafter to become an immovable barrier to every attempt at agreement; but for the time being

the problem was to restore the moderate elements in Egyptian politics to a position in which they might hold the balance between autocracy and demagoguery. The step which the King had taken in breaking off his alliance with the Liberals was certain to produce a situation which would compel the intervention of British authority—and British authority would have to walk very delicately if the situation was to be restored. This was the problem of which, in the summer of 1925, I myself was called upon to master the intricacies. His Majesty's Government had selected me to succeed Lord Allenby in the post of High Commissioner, and I was now endeavouring to prepare myself as thoroughly as possible for the duties I was to assume in the autumn.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SUDAN, 1920-1925

THE end of the Great War found the Sudan politically contented, but soon to be suffering in common with the rest of the world from an economic depression which, to a country still in the early stages of development, brought problems of particular gravity. The general decline in the price of prime commodities, and especially the heavy fall in the price of cotton, were accompanied by the imminent necessity to retard or postpone the programme of works of development. To take one case only, the price of labour and materials had risen to such an extent that in 1921 it was reported that the original estimates for the construction of the Makwar Dam on the Blue Nile and the canalisation of the Gezira tract were quite inadequate and that the work could not be continued unless further funds were raised. The revenue accruing to the Government, which in 1920 stood at a figure of just under 4½ million Egyptian pounds, in the following year had declined by nearly half a million, and by a similar figure in 1922.

In these conditions the strictest economy had to be exercised, and it was uncommonly fortunate that the public security of the country was now so well established that heavy and unexpected charges had not to be incurred under this head during the years between

1921 and 1924..The outlying districts in particular were never free from the danger of sudden outbreaks of violence, and a very typical incident of the kind occurred in the Nyala district of Southern Darfur in the autumn of 1921. Southern Darfur is the home of a fanatical and unruly population belonging to three main tribes, Arab and semi-Arab; and Darfur had not as yet had sufficient experience of regular government to make these tribes amenable to peaceful discipline. In September of 1921 there appeared the usual fanatical nomad leader declaring himself to be the Prophet Jesus and proclaiming a jihad or holy war. The Inspector of Nyala district, Mr. Tennant McNeill, was alone at the time and had at his immediate command about forty police. The Governor of Darfur, on receipt of the news, sent a further force of fifty mounted infantry of the Western Arab Corps. No combatant British officer was available to go with this force, but Captain Chown of the Royal Veterinary Corps volunteered to accompany it, and arrived at Nyala just half an hour before Nyala was fiercely attacked by a horde of fanatical insurgents. Five thousand men took part in the assault upon a garrison of forty police and fifty mounted infantry. Mr. McNeill and Captain Chown were killed and the attackers drove the Government forces out of the post by sheer weight of numbers. Apparently with the death of the two English officers they considered the fight over and won, and retired without consolidating their advantage. The defending survivors were at once rallied by Yuzbashi Bilal Riyak, the officer commanding the mounted infantry, and the post was reoccupied and successfully defended against a second furious assault. This brave little band, numbering only thirty combatants in all, and now with

little or no ammunition left, was preparing to meet a third assault when the *soi-disant* Prophet was wounded by a fortunate bullet, and with his removal from the field the advance collapsed. Of the total force of 90 men, 43 were found to have been killed and 21 wounded when a relieving force appeared. "Had the garrison not held its own there is little doubt that the rising would have attained very serious proportions immediately and would in all probability have spread beyond the borders of Darfur." The official report concludes: "before the end of the year the administration of the district was taking its normal course". Such amazing vicissitudes and such possibilities of conflagration were still part of the yearly work of government in the Sudan.

But they were not in essence comparable with the political insurgencies which vex more advanced countries, and with the spread of regular methods of administration and its accompaniment of economic development they were bound to occur less and less frequently. This work was steadily going forward, but the difference in degree of advance between the northern and the southern areas was, of course, very wide. The north is populated by Arab tribes, all of whom, whether nomad or sedentary, possessed a tradition of local or tribal organisation and owned the authority of sheikhs or village elders. In addition to this tribal or local consciousness, they possessed the unifying bonds of a common language and a common religion. In the south, on the other hand, was to be found a bewildering conglomeration of pagan and primitive tribes possessing no common factor of unification, speaking numerous different dialects, and practising, instead of a common religion, an infinite variety of superstitions. The result was naturally that



while in the north by 1921 it had become possible to regularise by legislation the traditional powers possessed by nomad sheikhs or councils of village elders, and even to institute advisory municipal councils in three of the larger towns, in the south the problem was still either to accustom lawless primitive tribes to the idea of a settled central authority, or else, having discovered the declining elements of native authority which still lingered on, to revive these by careful nursing and to substitute for the chaos of intertribal warfare some rudiments of practical administration. In the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, for instance, the same year that saw the institution of a municipal council for Khartoum saw the first successful attempt to bring the Nuer tribe under administration of any kind, whilst among their neighbours and hereditary foes, the Dinkas, a witch-doctor was causing serious unrest by predicting, upon the evidence of natural phenomena, the fall of the British authority. The Nubas in their mountainous province further west were still at frequent intervals likely to slaughter policemen and burn Government posts, symptoms merely of the natural hostility of youthful pagans to administrative discipline. The serious rising which took place in the newly acquired province of Darfur has already been described, and enough perhaps has been said to show the immense variety of conditions from which administrative amenity had to be evolved.

The policy followed by the Government was everywhere the same, although the methods of application had necessarily to vary considerably. It was, according to the official description,<sup>1</sup> "to leave administration, as far as possible, in the hands of native

<sup>1</sup> *Report on the Administration of the Sudan in 1921.*

“authorities, wherever they exist, under the supervision  
“of the Government, starting from things as it finds  
“them, putting its veto on what is dangerous and un-  
“just, and supporting what is fair and equitable in the  
“usage of the natives. Much obviously depends on the  
“existence and efficacy of any local or tribal organisa-  
“tion. When such does exist the aim of the Govern-  
“ment is to foster and guide it along right channels.  
“Where it has ceased to exist it may still be possible to  
“recreate it. In pursuance of this policy, the Govern-  
“ment encourages native chiefs to administer their  
“own tribes in accordance with native customs in so  
“far as those customs are not entirely repugnant to  
“ideas of justice and humanity and aims at non-inter-  
“ference except where necessary.” Thus in the north  
the Nomad Sheikhs Ordinance of 1922 regularised  
the traditional powers of some 300 sheikhs of nomadic  
and semi-nomadic Arab tribes, and even in the south  
it had been possible to inaugurate an experimental  
system of chiefs’ courts, known as Lukikos Courts,  
which were working not unsuccessfully even in some  
areas of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Mongalla provinces.  
The methods employed are well illustrated in the  
case of the new area of Dar Masalit, which had not  
been included within the Sudan boundaries until  
1919. “The existing system”, runs the official report  
for 1922, “was carefully investigated. It consisted of  
“a supreme authority in the person of a sultan, who  
“ruled the country both through agents appointed  
“personally by himself, and also through an organisa-  
“tion originally tribal but tending through the move-  
“ment of individual families to become territorial in  
“character. This organisation consisted of heads of  
“sections and heads of subsections, the latter being  
“the smallest administrative unit and controlling as

“many as six villages. Personal agents of the Sultan, both executive and judicial, acted independently of the local chiefs, and, as might be expected, this dual system of control led to considerable confusion and irregularity both in the collection of taxes and in the administration of justice. The powers and jurisdiction of the various authorities were vague and ill-defined, with the result that the well-being of the people depended to a large extent on the character of the Sultan.” It was of course decided, upon completion of this careful survey, to retain the existing machinery and method while endeavouring to purge it of abuses and anomalies. The first step was to procure that the existing machinery should carry out a regular assessment of the grain-crop with a view to putting the collection of the grain-tax on a systematic basis. Although the Resident was unable, owing to the troubles occurring elsewhere, to supervise the work of the assessment, it was carried out most successfully and with a high degree of honesty. The next step was to modify, define, and regularise the existing judicial system, and this work was carried out with the consent and co-operation of the Sultan. “This method of indirect and advisory administration appears so far satisfactory,” writes the Governor-General in his report, “and its future development in Dar Masalit will be watched with considerable interest.” This method of maintaining and encouraging traditional native administration was supplemented by the gradual and careful selection of natives of the Sudan for appointment to government posts carrying direct administrative duties. These appointments had to be made with the greatest care and caution, because the Sudanese, while accustomed to submit to the authority of a chief—whether heredi-

tary or elected—or of a non-native official, had as yet no experience of, or respect for, authority vested in the person of another native of the Sudan, to all appearances no better, if no worse, than himself. Imaginary grievances, suffered at the hands of customary authority, he would bear without much complaint, but he would be very quick to give active expression to his resentment of any such case of grievance caused by a native official.

In spite of the difficulties, however, steady progress was being made, and at the same time the decline in world prices was not permitted to hold up to any important extent the economic development, upon which so much had already been expended. The contract for the building of the Makwar dam had to be cancelled early in 1922, but after personal discussion with the Governor-General and his advisers, the British Government agreed, in order to allow the work to proceed, to guarantee the principal and interest of a further loan of £3,500,000, and a new contract was entered into with Messrs. S. Pearson & Sons, under which both dam and canalisation work were to be completed by July 1925. At the same time final arrangements were made for the commencement of another work of extreme importance for the economic life of the Sudan. Cotton is the prime commodity of export, upon which the prosperity of the Sudan was for long expected to depend, and the extension of cotton cultivation of good quality was a problem which had long engaged the earnest attention of the Government. In addition to the Gezira tract, much in this direction was hoped for from a proper utilisation of the fertile delta of the Gash river in the Kassala province, which lies on the Eritraean boundary. The Gash river rises in the

Abyssinian foot-hills and drains a long narrow area of mountainous country with heavy but spasmodic rainfall. Its waters in full flood are heavily laden with silt, and flow into no river, but just north of the town of Kassala begin to spill over a delta which the river has laid down in the course of years. This delta, consisting of a rich alluvium, highly fertile, extends to something like 500,000 acres, of which it was estimated that some 200,000 could be cultivated to produce first-class long-staple cotton. In 1922 an agreement was come to with a company called the Kassala Cotton Company, under which the Government was to construct at once a railway some 217 miles in length linking up Kassala with the line from Atbara to Port Sudan, while the company was to undertake the development of the cultivable area in the delta. The estimated cost of the project was £2 million. Of this sum the railway was to cost £1½ million, but the railway project would not of course serve only for the development of the Gash delta: it would also constitute the first step in the policy of opening up the whole of the Eastern Sudan by its ultimate extension from Kassala on to Sennar and so across the Blue Nile dam to connect with the existing main line. The construction of the line was commenced in October 1923 and completed with extreme rapidity by April 1924, and the Kassala Cotton Company took over the irrigated areas of the delta in July of the same year. It was confidently expected that the completion of the Gezira irrigation project in 1925 would, together with the development of the Gash delta, prove to be the turning-point in the economic history of the country.

There was further ground for optimism also in the state of the finances. In 1923 the revenue had shown,

instead of a further decline, a considerable recovery, and the same process was repeated in 1924 and brought the figure back again above the £4 million mark to a point which it had not reached since 1919.

But in 1924 came a sudden and sinister interruption in what had so far been a well-ordered story of arduous but successful endeavour. For the first time in the history of its connexion with Great Britain the Sudan tasted the unpleasant fruits of political agitation. It was Egypt who brought her this poisonous gift, not the first in the series of misfortunes caused by that neighbour. The story of the beginnings of the agitation which led to the troubles of 1924 has already been told in connexion with the history of the first constitutional democratic government of Egypt. What took place in the Sudan, after the murder of Sir Lee Stack, the Governor-General, in the streets of Cairo, still remains to be told.

It will be recalled that in January 1924 Zaghlul had been called upon to form the first democratically elected government of Egypt and had accepted the task. The result, as described in detail in Chapter VI. of this volume, was an immediate increase in political propaganda in the Sudan. The ground had long been in process of preparation, and now that the extremists held the reins of power in Egypt, the Egyptian disseminators of Sudanese political propaganda were no longer hampered by the same sense of fear that had previously imposed a restraint upon their activities. Within a very few months the effect began to be felt in the larger towns of the north, and in June overt troubles commenced with rioting at Omdurman. It will be further remembered that when the crisis had culminated in the murder of the Governor-General, it was decided that all Egyptian officers and

units should be at once withdrawn from the Sudan, and that the remaining purely Sudanese units of the Sudan Army should be constituted into a Sudan defence force under the Governor-General. For the first time in the history of the condominium the public security of the Sudan had been threatened by political agitation—an agitation engineered from Egypt and designed to promote only the interests of Egyptian extremists—which, undoubtedly, if the sternest measures had not been immediately taken to suppress it, might have resulted in abiding distress and unhappiness to the population of the Sudan.

Sir Lee Stack, the murdered Governor-General, had spent the greater part of his years of service in the Sudan. In 1927 he had been appointed Acting Governor-General in the place of Sir Reginald Wingate, and in 1919 he was made Sirdar. "An unswerving devotion to duty, a keen insight into men and affairs, a clear and analytical judgment, an inexhaustible sympathy and patience, and a very exceptional charm of personality, were the outstanding features of his character. Quiet and unostentatious in his work, courteous and thoughtful towards all alike, he won his way by persuasion rather than by force and shepherded the country through eight difficult years with conspicuous ability and success. His obvious single-mindedness and honesty of purpose gained the confidence and trust of all with whom he came into contact, and the well-being and contentment of the people to whose interests he devoted himself heart and soul are a living monument to his memory." This description of a public servant who could not easily be replaced is taken from the official report on the administration of the Sudan for 1924: there is nothing that a later historian would wish to

add to or delete from so simple and so rich a record of service untimely ended.

The decision to create a Sudanese Defence Force recruited only from natives of the Sudan was not a sudden outcome of Sir Lee Stack's death. It had been very clear for some years to the Sudanese authorities concerned that if and when Egyptian agitators decided to use the Sudan for their own ends the only effective agency which they would possess for creating disaffection in the Sudan itself would be Egyptians stationed in that country, either civil officials or army officers. There would be little difficulty in counteracting the efforts of other emissaries sent from Egypt, but so long as these official potential agencies remained, the danger of disaffection in the Army, spreading thence to the civil population, was always real and imminent. To an army recruited from a backward and fanatical population, the complications of a divided allegiance were not easy to explain satisfactorily, while the dangers were enormously increased by the presence of two classes of non-native officers and of the power which disloyal Egyptian officers would possess to influence the minds of their men by unsettling stories of what the future might hold in store. So that when in the early part of 1924 subversive propaganda from Egypt was intensified there was no other course but to consider how the discipline and *moral* of the Army could be preserved. The High Commissioner, the Governor-General, and the Prime Minister held a personal conference in London in August 1924 to consider what steps were necessary in face of this danger. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald then took the view that the British Government would be prepared, if the Egyptians refused to play the game in the Sudan, to tell



them that they must quit the Sudan altogether: a proposal was at the same time taking shape for the creation of a purely Sudanese force. In order to meet the additional expense involved to the Sudan budget, it was advocated that the economic development of the country, and particularly of the cotton-growing areas under canal irrigation, should be accelerated very considerably.

The negotiations with Zaghul which shortly ensued did nothing to ease a situation already tense to the point of crisis. His attitude in regard to the Sudan amounted to a clear denunciation of the Convention of 1899, for his open contention was that the Sudan was the property of Egypt, and that the British had stolen it against the will of the Egyptian people. It was a stupid attitude to take up, even if it be judged only from the point of view of self-interest. In this light it could only be justified on the assumption that Zaghul was right in despising British assertions, for had the Egyptians been told to remove themselves at once from the Sudan, they were powerless either to refuse or to retaliate effectively. Indeed there was no reasonable ground upon which Egyptians could justify the extremist attitude in regard to the Sudan. The cry had been used for their own domestic ends, and those Egyptians who thought as well as felt on the subject could only have argued either that the control of the Nile water might be unfairly used as a weapon of compulsion upon Egypt, or that the competition of Sudanese cotton might in time menace their own economic welfare—arguments which would not have much influenced an impartial audience.

Nothing, however, had been done in regard to the problem until events in Egypt brought about the

decision to evacuate all Egypt units at once. And immediately the trouble which had been anticipated became real. The Egyptian artillery and 3rd Battalion refused incontinently to move without orders from King Fuad. This difficulty was not insuperable and need not have led to disturbance, but the period of grace thus acquired was, as might have been expected, utilised by the disloyal in instigating disaffection among the Sudanese battalions. The uncertainty of the situation and the indeterminate position of the Egyptian officers and units thoroughly upset the *moral* and discipline of the whole Army and made the work of the disaffected much easier, and on November 27 the 11th Sudanese mutinied in Khartoum and a number of them left barracks carrying arms and marched on the Gordon College. The acting Sirdar, Colonel Huddleston, took gallant and personal charge of the ensuing situation and endeavoured to persuade the mutineers to return to discipline and submit to his personal orders, but no persuasion was of any avail. Fighting with the mutineers took place on the 27th and 28th, and it was not till the evening of the 28th that it was reported that the mutineers were finally captured or scattered, leaving heavy casualties.

The problem now was to build out of a situation so incomprehensible to the ignorant mind a new force, loyal and undivided in its allegiance. The Egyptian units began to take their departure without incident on November 30, and their entrainment continued steadily, but it was now difficult to persuade the populace that it was the Egyptians and not the British who were leaving. They had indeed done deadly work. The confidence of the British officers in the regular Sudanese troops was shaken, the *moral*

of the latter was undermined and in the case of at least two regiments destroyed, it seemed, beyond repair. Only the irregulars remained thoroughly trustworthy and clearly unshaken in their belief that the only thing that mattered was their own British officers.

The British authorities in the Sudan were driven to the conclusion that only by the immediate abolition of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium and a formal declaration of Great Britain's trusteeship could any foundation be laid for a durable rebuilding of public security. They were now in possession of evidence, which they regarded as indisputable, that the mutiny had been engineered by Egyptians under the leadership of one of the senior officers of the Egyptian artillery, and that the instigation had been carried out after the Egyptian units had received orders to leave. They felt that nothing was wanting to justify upon legal and moral grounds the step which considerations of expediency also urged, and they pressed very strongly that it should be taken. The High Commissioner, however, could not accept their view, and the Secretary of State—now Sir Austen Chamberlain—was also opposed to it. The latter feared the possible effect upon foreign opinion; the former was concerned with the situation which faced him in Egypt and the necessity of not making things too difficult for Ziwar Pasha and his Cabinet, who indeed deserved much for their courage and loyalty in stepping into the breach.

On December 6 the acting Governor-General, in full agreement with the acting Sirdar, telegraphed as follows to Cairo for transmission to London: "Foundations of condominium are proved utterly "untrustworthy and we cannot rebuild army on

“double allegiance. It is impossible to guarantee that “we shall not have another mutiny: we can deal with “it if it occurs with our present forces, but every life “lost on both sides in suppressing it will be due to our “not doing what, according to all opinion here, we “should have done on the morning after Stack’s “death, viz. declaring abolition of Egyptian authority. “The chance of a further mutiny will be very greatly “reduced by lowering the Egyptian flag.”

The Secretary of State was naturally prepared to attach very great weight to strong joint representations from the Governor-General and the Sirdar, backed as they apparently were by the unanimous opinion of other Sudanese officials, but the Governor-General was no doubt right when he said that the step he proposed ought to have been taken upon the morning after the crime. To take it later would have been difficult to justify, especially now that the demands made upon Egypt in respect of the irrigation of the Gezira tract had provided the ill-disposed with a handle for criticism. That demand was, as we have seen, soon moderated, but it had had an unfortunate effect in Egypt and on foreign opinion, and the counteracting effect of its subsequent moderation would have been largely lost if at the same time we had made harsher demands in regard to the condominium. Probably the truth was that another opportunity had been lost, and that there was now nothing for it but to make the best of the very difficult situation which existed. The policy which was thenceforward followed was to preserve the condominium but to remove the Egyptian units from the Sudanese army.

It was unfortunate from the point of view of future progress that the opportunity was not taken

when it presented itself to clear away the embarrassing differences which had for so long existed between the actual and the legal positions of the Sudanese administration. Had the condominium been at once denounced, this would have been recognised as a fitting punishment for the crime and the behaviour which led to it: even Egyptians themselves would have realised that the blame for such a culmination must lie upon the shoulders of their own Prime Minister, while nobody could have been found to deny that the step must conduce in every way to the welfare and advancement of the peoples of the Sudan. But the opportunity passed and was not taken. The Sudan was left to reconstruct, as best it could, the loyalty and the discipline of its army. By January 1925, outwardly at any rate, the situation in that country had returned to normal and there was little cause for anxiety in regard to future trouble. By March 12 in the same year, Lord Allenby was writing to Ziwar Pasha acknowledging the Egyptian Government's expressed desire to contribute towards the cost of the administration of the Sudan, and concluding, "In spite of the measures "which the events of last year obliged them to take, "His Majesty's Government have preserved the con- "dominium created by the Boutros-Cromer Conven- "tion of 1899 and they recognise, therefore, that it is "only right and proper that the Egyptian Govern- "ment should so contribute. They agree that the "amount fixed for this purpose should be £750,000".

The Egyptian Government had therefore again officially recognised the existence of the 1899 Convention, and the Sudan was still to receive from Egypt a much-needed subvention: also it was just possible in more optimistic moments to hope that

some advantage might accrue to Ziwar Pasha's government in the eyes of the Egyptian people from the fact that the condominium was still intact, when we had been so severely provoked to abolish it. But these, after all, were very minor advantages and were soon proved to possess little value. Ziwar's government did not long survive, subsequent negotiations attached very little weight to the condominium, and Egyptians continued to ask for further concessions. Perhaps the only thing that can be said with justice is that laudable efforts were made to make the best of a bad business.

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## CHAPTER IX

### 1925: AND THE FUTURE

WHEN I arrived in Egypt in 1925, the position of affairs was briefly as follows. In 1922 the policy which His Majesty's Government had followed for forty years had been abandoned, and a new policy had been announced, which was henceforth to govern the relations between Great Britain and Egypt. Our previous policy had been to occupy Egypt and to supervise the administration of that country until such time as it appeared to His Majesty's Government that that administration was stable and capable of safeguarding the welfare of the people of Egypt. The new policy was fundamentally different; while recognising Egypt as an independent sovereign State, it laid down the position which we claimed in Egypt *vis-à-vis* all other Powers, and enumerated the matters in which the maintenance of our special position was vital to imperial security. In all these matters the *status quo* was maintained, but we declared our willingness to negotiate specific agreements upon them with the Egyptian Government at some later date when they might desire it and circumstances promised success. In the meantime the Egyptians would be free to develop national institutions in accordance with their aspirations. The British position, however, was officially described in the following important words:

“We propose to declare that the welfare and integrity of Egypt are necessary to the peace and safety of the British Empire, which will, therefore, always maintain as an essential British interest the special relations between itself and Egypt long recognised by other Governments.”<sup>1</sup>

I have elsewhere discussed the Declaration of 1922, and my views in regard to it. When the post of High Commissioner was offered to me, there was no question of a revision of that declaration. As far as I was concerned, I realised that the new policy represented a definite commitment, and the only questions which I had to ask myself were whether, as High Commissioner, I could honestly support that policy, and whether I could contribute towards its fruition. My period of governorship in India had afforded me special opportunities of watching the course of affairs in Egypt during the years preceding and immediately following the Declaration of 1922. I had formed a strong impression that the new policy then adopted had never been given a fair chance to succeed. Firmly announced at the outset, it had never been firmly maintained. We had been far too prone to disregard its definite implications and we had constantly been guilty of official expressions and actions which had every appearance of an inclination to depart from it. By our own behaviour, we were destroying the chances of success of our own child: our vacillation was arousing in the minds of Egyptians a belief that we had no confidence in our own declaration and no determination to adhere to it. Yet if the policy was to succeed, if we were finally to achieve by mutual agreement a

<sup>1</sup> *Egypt*, No. 1, 1922. Telegram, dated February 27, 1922, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor-General of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa: communicating message from Prime Minister.



reasonable settlement of the outstanding points, it surely could only be by making it clear to Egyptians that we were firmly determined to maintain their independence, and equally firmly to discharge the responsibilities we had assigned to ourselves. As long as they were given any ground for thinking that such determination, whether in regard to what may be termed the permissive or to the restrictive aspects of the Declaration, did not exist, so long would the counsels of the extremist intransigents continue to carry weight, and a policy of erosion and *grignotage* be encouraged. But once they had realised that we meant what we said, the voice of reason would have a chance to make itself heard. This argument, which to me seemed powerful, was strongly reinforced by the consideration that haste and impatience would also be very damaging to the interests of Egypt herself. The country had barely emerged from conditions in which lawlessness and violence had been widespread. She had handicapped herself with a Constitution which was utterly unsuited to the nature of the people; her politicians had gained popular support in circumstances and by methods which were no guarantee that they could provide a healthy administration. It was essential that they should be tried out in conditions less feverish than those which had hitherto obtained; and therefore that they should be left free for a space to devote themselves to the pressing internal problems which awaited them. This could not happen as long as we were urging negotiations upon them, or encouraging them by our own vacillation to be constantly harassing us in the hope of concessions.

Such, as my memory recalls them, were the trains of thought which then passed through my mind and which led me to conclude that there was a chance to

do in Egypt valuable work if I were equal to the task. And when I undertook the office of High Commissioner it was with the determination to make the policy of 1922 a real policy—to leave no doubt in any minds that whilst the measure of independence granted under the Declaration must be real, the reservations and Egypt's respect for them must be equally real and our intention to see them respected made evident. I was confirmed, moreover, in this view by the parting counsel I received from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when, according to custom I visited him before departure at Lossiemouth in his capacity as leader of the opposition. "Be as liberal as 'you may be,'" he said to me, "but be firm, eternally 'firm'—advice which seemed to me admirably to summarise the only course open under the Declaration of 1922. By this means alone, as it seemed to me, could the current policy of the British Government achieve success.

Owing to grave internal difficulties of every kind, the Constitution did not come into being until April 1923, and the first elections under it were not completed until January 1924. The practical independence of Egypt—the real inception of responsible democratic government—began therefore no earlier than the beginning of the year 1924, when Zaghlul and his party were returned to complete power, and the men of moderate views were blotted out of the picture. Yet by April of that year Zaghlul, still feverish from his electoral triumph, still untested by the practical difficulties of administration, was in possession of an invitation from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to come to London to negotiate a treaty. The haste with which this step was taken was as unfortunate as it was unnecessary. It could only serve to

inflate Zaghlul, and increase the unreasonableness of his demands, while it afforded strong presumptive evidence that we disliked our present position and would make considerable concessions to escape from it. The result was foreordained. Zaghlul, as we have seen, adopted an utterly unreasonable attitude, not only in regard to negotiations, but in regard alike to internal politics, and towards foreign representatives. Worse still, the British Government showed themselves inclined to tolerate Zaghlul's impossible demands, and went to considerable lengths to bring him to London. At no stage in the subsequent proceedings—not even when the negotiations had broken down in October—were the four fundamental reservations, upon which we had taken our stand, definitely and comprehensively insisted upon. A month later, Sir Lee Stack was murdered and the policy of concession was dropped with a vengeance. In face of the sudden display of resolution by His Majesty's Government, Zaghlul resigned, and without serious opposition from any section, but also without Parliamentary or electoral support, a Ministry of Anglophile moderates was formed to deal with the crisis.

In such a situation, what element of stability was discernible? The British Government had oscillated dizzily from negotiation with a violently unreasonable extremist leader to scarcely veiled threats of reaction. The democratic constitution had given complete power to a political party which was fanatical and unbalanced; administration could only be carried on in disregard of the requirements of the Constitution: and such disregard must involve great risks. Among all the parties of importance in this situation, there was none who could justifiably claim to be displaying

those qualities of steadiness and firmness without which there was no hope of a permanent accommodation. Was it unreasonable to conclude that if the British element took the lead in this regard, the other elements in the explosive mixture would have some chance of being infected by its example and gradually calm down to a more equable temperature. Our declared attitude was clear enough and demonstrably generous—we need not be ashamed to adhere to it with firmness, nor fear any charge of stubbornness or dishonesty if we did so. And if we stood still for a little or even for a long time, Egypt would have all the better chance of surmounting the difficulties of her internal position, of adjusting her political machinery to the conditions actually obtaining, and of comprehending the realities which must govern her permanent relations with us.

I have written so much by way of preface to the story of my own tenure of office, and to make clear the attitude of mind in which I accepted the invitation of His Majesty's Government. In order that I might be in a position to carry out what was generally acknowledged to be a task of grave difficulty it seemed to me that I should be justified in asking that certain conditions should be clearly laid down and understood before I accepted. In a situation so unsettled as prevailed in Egypt at the time, where so many cross-currents were moving under the surface of the waters, constantly changing in force and direction, it seemed essential that the British representative should be given a considerable share in the planning of the day-to-day operations necessary to carry out British policy. It would be difficult enough for him to keep track of what was happening behind the scenes, and often impossible for him to convey

an adequate picture to England either in sufficient detail, or in time enough to allow of decisive action being taken. I asked, therefore, that so long as I was loyally carrying out the policy laid down by the Cabinet and accepted by me—the policy of the Declaration—I should be given a large measure of freedom in selecting the day-to-day methods by which effect should be given to that policy. It was clear that, if this request were not made and accepted, such assets as I possessed of long experience of Oriental countries and their ways would lose most, if not all, of their value, and that a member of the Diplomatic Service could more profitably carry out the function to be assigned to the High Commissioner. That the request was at once accepted confirmed me in my view that the situation in Egypt demanded it, and also gave me ground for strong hope that my relations with the Secretary of State would be frank and cordial, and that we should be able to work together with real effect.

One interesting and somewhat illuminating problem arose even before my departure. The King's *chef de Cabinet* in the course of conversation at Alexandria with Mr. Henderson, then acting High Commissioner, casually threw out the supposition that I should, of course, be bringing with me Letters of Credence for presentation to the King. The conversation was reported to London, and the question at once arose as to whether I should in fact bear such credentials, and as to what might be the awkward results if I did not. It seemed to me beyond dispute that for the High Commissioner for the first time to present such letters was to put him at the very outset in the same position as the representative of any other Power in Egypt, to ignore his special responsibility

for the maintenance of the reserved points, and to deprive him of the position necessary to carry this out. At the same time I did not attach serious importance to the *chef de Cabinet's* conversation, which was probably nothing more than one of the many little *ballons d'essai* which Oriental, and not Oriental alone, ingenuity fabricates and throws out in such astonishing quantities. I went, in fact, without Letters of Credence, visited His Majesty in my own carriage and with my own escort according to the established precedent, and had an interesting and most friendly conversation with him, throughout the whole of which no reference to this supposedly all-important question was made.

I arrived in Egypt on October 21, 1925, to find a state of affairs which could only be described as chaotic. Ziwar Pasha, the Prime Minister, was still in Europe, whither he had proceeded in July. The Cabinet over which he was to preside on his return was a Coalition of Independents, Liberals, and Ittehadists, strong in influence and ability, but not entirely coherent, and having no constitutional justification in the state of representative institutions. How fluid and uncertain was this situation in fact was very soon demonstrated, for a week after my arrival the publication by the Government of a draft Law of Political Associations—which was designed to give them extensive powers to suppress all political opposition, incensed both Opposition parties and resulted in a *rapprochement* between the Liberal Constitutionals and the Wafd. The publication of this law seemed to me to be rather the occasion than the fundamental cause of this *rapprochement*. The real bond which was drawing all politicians outside the Government and the King's Party together was the

growing power of King Fuad, and the increasing intervention in administrative affairs of Nashaat Pasha, the King's *chef de Cabinet*.

Ziwar Pasha returned from Europe on November 9, to be confronted almost at once with a published declaration of Saad Zaghlul to the effect that he strongly supported a proposal recently canvassed, that Parliament, whether summoned by the King or not, should assemble on November 21, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Three days later, on November 18, Government replied with *communiqués* prohibiting the assembly of Parliament, warning students to refrain from political activity, and detailing the preventive measures that would be taken. On November 21 these measures were duly put into force, and troops and police blocked all approach to the Houses of Parliament: whereupon 134 ex-Deputies and 56 Senators, belonging to all the Opposition parties, assembled at the Continental Hotel, elected Saad Zaghlul President of the Chamber, Mohamed Mahmoud and Abdul Hamed Said Vice-Presidents, and proceeded to pass a number of resolutions protesting against the existence and activities of the present Ministry. The important thing about this meeting was not the result of its deliberations, but the fact that for the first time the members of the Watanist Party, the Liberal Constitutional Party, and the Wafd had publicly associated themselves together in a common cause.

With all these actual incidents the High Commissioner, was not concerned. But the state of affairs which underlay them—the tendency towards absolutism and the drift away from constitutional rule—was a matter about which he could not but be gravely anxious. It was clear to me—and indeed to the world

at large—that occupying the position which we in fact occupied in Egypt, and also by virtue of our Declaration of policy in 1922, we should be bound, in order to protect foreign interests, to intervene forcibly in the event of a serious internal conflict. Circumstances now compelled me to envisage such a situation developing as a result of unconstitutional activities on the part of those associated with the Palace: and I asked myself what would be the effect upon our position in Egypt, and our chances of securing a genuine accommodation with her political leaders, if our intervention were to be directed against a movement of all political parties, a movement provoked by what must inevitably appear to be an attempt to suppress the Constitution and set up an absolute monarchy.

For the moment, however, my hands were tied by the necessity of bringing to an early conclusion the negotiations which were proceeding between the Italian and Egyptian Governments in regard to the settlement of the Western Frontier.

These negotiations, the conduct of which on the Egyptian side had been entrusted to Sidky Pasha, had gone on for so long without determination, that the Italian Government had for some time been evincing symptoms of extreme restiveness. The points at issue had, by the time of my arrival in Egypt, narrowed themselves down to the vexed question of the oasis of Jaghboub. Although it was quite impossible to adduce any convincing proofs of the fact, the Egyptian people as a whole had easily persuaded themselves that Jaghboub was by rights a part of Egyptian territory. The Italians, on the other hand, claimed that Jaghboub formed, and had always formed, part of Cyrenaica, and this view was borne out by such author-



ities as existed on the subject, as well as by the investigations made by Lord Milner. Sidky Pasha, however, was stubbornly opposed to the Italian claim; King Fuad was refusing to be drawn into what he regarded as an unpopular responsibility, and therefore would not give definite instructions to Sidky or to the Cabinet. Meanwhile, it was extremely difficult to persuade the Italian Government to continue to exhibit patience: already harassed beyond bearing by Egyptian procrastination, they were now contemplating the breaking off of negotiations followed by unilateral action in regard to the disputed oasis. It was impossible for the British Government to contemplate such an eventuality: the support which we should then have had to give to Egypt would have involved us in a quarrel with a friendly Power, and in a cause the legality of which appeared to us extremely doubtful. The King and the Prime Minister did not fortunately prove obdurate in the face of urgent representations, and these difficult negotiations were brought to a conclusion on December 26, when the agreement between the two Governments was signed by Ziwar Pasha as Prime Minister.

My hands were now free to deal with the situation brought about by the activities of Nashaat Pasha. Nashaat Pasha was possessed of remarkable abilities and an attractive personality; by political disposition, moreover, he was friendly to the British connexion and believed in the advantages of Anglo-Egyptian co-operation. This situation was, therefore, by no means easy or pleasant to deal with, and yet it had to be ended, not only in the best interests of the King himself—upon a long view—but also because its further development must inevitably place the British power, in the eyes of all Egypt, in the posi-

tion of suppressors of the free Constitution which had only just been granted to her. I believed that, in spite of the immediate blow which King Fuad might feel that the fortunes of his party would receive, he would be statesman enough to take in good part my exposition of the situation as I saw it, and to realise that his own best interests demanded that a Palace official should not practise so obvious and masterful an intervention in administrative business for the purpose of procuring such obvious political results. This belief was fortunately justified by the conclusion.

On December 10 Nashaat Pasha was gazetted as a Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Madrid, and left the Palace. His disappearance had a marked effect upon a situation which was continually upon the point of becoming critical. The hostility of all the Opposition parties to the Ministry of Ziwar Pasha was extreme. It was prevented from boiling over into violent action chiefly by reason of the fundamental distrust among those parties, a distrust which fortunately rendered their union precarious. But the situation remained one of considerable anxiety, and seemed certain to grow worse with time. My intervention in regard to Nashaat Pasha had had a temporarily calming effect, and the same result was produced by a speech which I had the opportunity to make on December 24 to a large gathering of notables, by whom I was very cordially received. In that speech I sought to emphasise His Majesty's Government's faith in the principle of the constitutional régime in Egypt, and their sincere desire that it should be successful.

These temporary alleviations of the situation left the main problem untouched. It would have been

solved had it been possible to withdraw the Liberal leaders from their alliance with the Wafd, and induce them to co-operate with Ziwar Pasha in his Ministry. But efforts to bring this about met with no success. It could also have been solved by the holding of fresh elections; but unfortunately this solution had been rendered much more difficult by the action of Ziwar Pasha himself. On December 8, in opposition to my earnest advice, the Prime Minister had promulgated a new electoral Law. I had been able to induce him to modify this law considerably, but as it stood it effected the disenfranchisement of some 10 or 15 per cent of the existing electorate. That such a measure was in itself desirable in the interests of Egypt no sane mind could doubt, but in the existing political conditions it seemed unwise of the Prime Minister to provoke the further hostility of the Wafd, and at the same time to lay himself open once more to a charge of disregarding the Constitution. The step he was proposing seriously postponed the possibility of a General Election, because new electoral lists could not be ready before May. Until Elections were held the fear that an unconstitutional régime might be made permanent would be continually goading the Opposition in the direction of violence, and they were privately circulating threats of strikes in Government offices, and general disturbances. Meanwhile it was becoming clear to me that throughout Egypt there did exist a widespread and genuine feeling of aversion to the Ministry in power. Although in the Provinces political feeling was not greatly excited, undoubtedly the credit of the Ministry stood low. The King was not at this time popular in the countryside, and the Ministry was believed to be subservient to him. And this view

had been confirmed by an incident which had at the same time gravely shaken the confidences and loyalty of the official classes—the summary dismissal from his post of Mahomed Zaghlul Pasha, Under-Secretary for Communications. Mahomed Zaghlul Pasha had for several years held the rank of Under-Secretary of State, and was regarded as a sensible and hard-working man. His dismissal was effected with indecent haste, and it was widely supposed that its cause was the desire of King Fuad to get rid of an Under-Secretary who had obstructed certain plans which the King entertained for the development of his own estates. After this there was reason to fear that official obedience to Government orders would not be entirely whole-hearted. Yet, in spite of these difficulties the fact remained that Ziwar Pasha, alike by his courage and by his unswerving loyalty to both King Fuad and the British connexion, had put us under an obligation which I was quite clear must be honoured at all costs.

Such was the state of affairs when in January 1926 I paid my first official visit to the Sudan. On my return early in February, the situation had to some extent been clarified by the decision of the Opposition leaders to boycott the Election and to summon a Congress for February 19 to decide upon a remedy for the present situation. The Senate had also passed a resolution calling upon the Government to abstain from enforcing the new Electoral Law, and to hold Elections under “the Law conforming to the Constitution”. The first intention of the Prime Minister, whose courage never failed him, was to forbid the meeting of the Congress and to return a provocative answer to the Senate. From both these courses I was able to dissuade him, and the line which he sub-

sequently took enabled him to withdraw with a good grace from his new Electoral Law, and to substitute for it the Law of 1924, which had been ratified by both Houses. With Elections under this Law fixed for the following May, the claws of the Congress were considerably pared, and it could, and did, meet and dissolve without causing any serious trouble.

The focus of anxiety was now shifted to the period after the Elections. And in regard to the results of these—whatever the Law under which they were held—there was no room for the slightest doubt. Zaghlul's party was bound to be returned with an overwhelming majority, and it was impossible to foretell with certainty what would follow upon that result. There was no reason, however, to take too pessimistic a view. It was still possible to conclude that there were tendencies at work which were on the whole encouraging. Perhaps the foremost among these was the still considerable residue of respectful attention directed by all classes towards the British Residency—a legacy of immense value bequeathed by the pre-War administration and maintained by Lord Allenby's personal prestige and singleness of purpose. On my arrival in Cairo, I had been received with every appearance of cordiality, and it had been made quite clear that Egyptians of all classes thought it worth while to stand well with His Majesty's representative. The Ministry were constant in seeking advice from the Residency, while the Liberal Constitutionalists, the moderate wing of an uneasy Opposition alliance, showed themselves more than willing to get into friendly touch with me, to discuss the situation frankly, and to listen to what I had to say. Although, in the prevailing fear of autocracy, and of the influence behind the existing Ministry, it was impossible

to secure an accommodation between the various moderate elements, yet there was much ground to hope that, by a combination of circumspection and steadiness, the influence of the Residency might have strong effect as a stabilising force.

How strong and widespread was British prestige in the subconscious mind of Egypt was forcibly demonstrated to me on more than one occasion. After my speech at the Continental Hotel in December, the Zaghulist Press somewhat naïvely called for action instead of words from the Residency, hinting that it was my duty to dismiss the Ministry of Ziwar Pasha, and to insist upon Parliament being summoned at once!

Meanwhile Zaghlul was exhibiting a discernible tendency towards moderation. The events of 1924 had had their chastening effect upon him. He had been made to realise the overwhelming power of His Majesty's Government, and with two of his close colleagues about to be prosecuted for the murder of the Sirdar, he was still in danger of being stigmatised himself. He was anxious, therefore, to remain as far as possible in the background, and to cultivate a name for moderation. He was also realising that, however active in destruction his own party might be, it had singularly few members of any constructive ability—it would pay him, therefore, to endeavour to secure the support of some at least of the able members of the moderate party. And, finally, his health was not all that it should be, and he was compelled to nurse his energies rather carefully.

There were undoubtedly opportunities to hand for a restoration of sanity in Egyptian politics. The power which the Residency possessed was a real power, recognised by all the political groups in

Egypt. It was not necessary for the High Commissioner to step out into the arena: he could sit at home in the Residency, secure in the knowledge that his advice would be spontaneously sought, and his intervention behind the scenes invited. Provided that he kept clearly in his mind the Declaration of 1922, and took no step which did not, upon a strict interpretation, accord with those terms, he would inevitably be invited to exercise a considerable influence upon the affairs of Egypt. The most extreme circumspection was necessary, but the prudent and carefully directed exercise of British influence was a duty which the interests of Egypt and England alike demanded. I need hardly say that I did not envisage a return to "Cromerism": indeed I found, and still find, it impossible to understand what that curious phrase means. But I did feel very strongly that a considerable share of responsibility for the success of constitutional government in Egypt still lay upon the British. The prestige which still attached to us, of which we could not divest ourselves even if we would, furnished us providentially with a means of discharging this responsibility honestly and in good faith. And after all, it would have been the merest humbug to act as if the British Army of occupation did not exist. The existence of that Army unquestionably gave us a potential domination in Egypt, and the existence of that potentiality laid upon us an inescapable responsibility. It was useless to argue that we had no intention of using our resources of power. No Egyptian could so far disbelieve the evidence of his senses as to accept such a statement for a moment. In the popular view the Government, be it good or ill, owed its existence to British tolerance, if not to British support. However tempting such a course

might be in theory, in practice it was quite impossible—Egypt herself at this stage would not allow us—to retire to our tents and take no part in her political struggles. It is a method which people quite often suggest that we should now adopt in dealing with some of our imperial problems. For me it had an air of tired irritability which made it peculiarly repellent, nor do I believe that relations between Achilles and the Greeks were made more cordial after he had decided upon a similar policy.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE DECLARATION OF 1922 UPHELD

THE declaration that a fresh election was to be held had, as anticipated, the effect of dissipating the immediate crisis. Upon the meeting of the National Congress on February 19, 1926, there followed a marked lull in the political atmosphere, and all parties began to busy themselves in their preparations. The most difficult task before the leaders was, in the practical distribution of seats, to maintain the unity between Watan, Wafd, and Constitutional Liberals, which had hitherto been far more apparent than real. The negotiations which took place on this question came frequently very near to breaking up the coalition, and the agreement ultimately arrived at was a fragile instrument indeed: both Liberals and Watanists entertained a lively, if temporarily suppressed, indignation against Zaghlul's arrogance, while the more moderate Liberals were filled with an equally lively distrust of the future under his leadership. In the event nine constituencies were allowed to Watanists, and forty-five to Liberals, while the Wafd contested one hundred and sixty seats.

The 22nd May was the date fixed for the final Elections, and several days before that date there was no escaping the conclusion that the result would be a sweeping victory for the Wafd. It was essential,

therefore, to be prepared for the all too probable eventuality that Zaghul would wish to take office, and that we should be faced with a situation exactly similar in its potentialities for disaster to that of 1924. His tenure of office then, and the policy he had followed, had been responsible for a series of political crimes, the culmination of which had compelled us to issue the ultimatum of November 1924. It is true that Zaghul had constantly been at pains to announce that he had no intentions of reassuming the Premiership himself: he was too old, he was "content "to be the Father of the People" and his health forbade the strain of further office. It was unfortunately not possible to attach much credence to these pronouncements; indeed, it was essential that we should carefully consider and decide in time what course of action on the part of His Majesty's Government would most closely accord with the policy declared in 1922. That policy had set up a constitutional régime in Egypt, and to refuse to accept as Prime Minister the leader of an overwhelming majority of elected representatives, would at first sight appear to be a definite departure from that policy, which would require very cogent arguments to justify it. Moreover, Zaghul was growing older and had recently been taught a severe lesson, so that there might seem to be ground for hoping that he might now be more reasonable. And in any case, how could he learn to be wise in his handling of responsibility if the opportunity of undertaking responsibility was denied to him? Considerations of prudence also seemed to dictate that Zaghul, in whom the real political power would continue to reside whatever the composition of the Ministry, would be a more serious danger if he were using his power from a concealed position, in which

the constitutional responsibility would rest not upon him but upon another.

All these were arguments supporting the view that we could acquiesce in Zaghlul's taking office without doing injury to our declaration of policy. They advocated, moreover, the negative attitude, which, if at all justifiable, is always so much easier to adopt than the positive. But unfortunately for our peace of mind and future ease, the Declaration of 1922 was not simply a declaration of the constitutional independence of Egypt. Under it we had expressly reserved responsibilities, of which we could not lightly divest ourselves; and behind the letter of this declaration lay also the intention which informed it—the intention to procure an amicable arrangement with Egypt. Unfortunately again, the essential policy for which Zaghlul's name stood in Egypt was a policy of bitter hostility to Great Britain, and to the relations with Egypt which Great Britain had solemnly declared herself to be determined to maintain. Zaghlul's return to power could therefore only be interpreted as a serious set-back to our policy, and a triumph for its opponents. If we acquiesced in that return, the inference was certain to be drawn that we were disinclined to adhere to our policy, and the possibility of a return from extremism to reasonableness would still further recede. Moreover, all these probabilities would be much enhanced by the apparent difference between the words which we had spoken in 1924 and our present action. Then, we had indicted Zaghlul's government in the most solemn terms, as responsible for a campaign of murder and lawlessness which had justifiably aroused among the foreign residents in Egypt the gravest fears for their safety, and had clearly demonstrated that under his

leadership the Government of Egypt was unwilling or unable to protect foreign lives. Could we now acquiesce in the return of such a government and still be held sincerely desirous of discharging the responsibilities we had reserved to ourselves?

Upon the point of policy, however much one might consider it, there was no avoiding the conclusion that an honest and strict adherence to the Declaration of 1922 demanded that we should, if necessary, intervene to prevent Zaghlul from taking office. I consulted my own advisers upon the point, as well as responsible officials in the service of the Egyptian Government, and leading British residents, and found that the overwhelming majority of them were of like mind with myself. It was therefore without more misgivings than those which naturally accompany an important decision, that I set the arguments for and against such action before the Secretary of State, acquainted him with my own views, and asked for authority to take action accordingly. It was but natural that the case should first present itself to his mind from the aspect of the difficulties he would have in justifying such action before public opinion in England: and it was perhaps equally natural that I in Egypt should be inclined to rate those difficulties less highly. There appeared to be at least some cause for holding that public opinion would be less shocked by a deviation from constitutional principles than by finding His Majesty's Government extending official recognition to one who was widely held to be morally responsible for the Sirdar's murder. But when it came to a discussion of Eastern opinion all the reliable information which I had received made it clear that Zaghlul's return to power would be regarded on all sides, Egyptian and foreign, as a serious blow to

our authority, and that our acquiescence would be taken as evidence of a definite intention to abandon in practice the policy and attitude which we had publicly declared. There was also one other important point upon which there was room for a difference of view as between London and Egypt. At the beginning of 1925, when elections were about to be held, Lord Allenby had given a definite and official assurance to British and Egyptian officials in the service of the Egyptian Government that Zaghlul would on no account be permitted to return to power. It must be remembered that throughout Zaghlul's régime British officials had carried on their duties in the most arduous and dangerous circumstances, being not only the daily targets for Zaghlulist criticism and abuse, but in many cases paying the penalty for their service with their lives. Nor were Egyptian officials much more happily placed. Those Mudirs who at Lord Allenby's behest had remained at their posts and restored order, had inevitably come into sharp conflict with Zaghlul and his party. Constant persecution, following upon summary eviction from their posts, would have been their inevitable fate. Such a promise was clearly essential to protect loyal officials and to ensure that the work of administration would be carried on. The Foreign Office, it appeared, had never specifically sanctioned such a promise, and had no official record that it had been given: they were inclined, therefore, to minimise its importance and to regard themselves, and consequently myself, as very lightly bound by it. In the East, however, official records and documentary evidence are not regarded with the same reverence that is accorded to them in Whitehall. Nor would the Egyptian official who received a promise from the High Commissioner stop

to ask himself whether that promise had received the sanction of the Secretary of State. Mudirs indeed themselves came to me and claimed its fulfilment. They would have regarded the return of Zaghlul to power as a breach of faith on our part, and our chance of securing the co-operation and trust of loyal Egyptians in the future would be gravely jeopardised.

When all these arguments were put before him in detail, Sir Austen Chamberlain at once acknowledged their force, and agreed to the policy proposed. But even while these discussions had been going on, endeavours had been made to secure a way out of the fundamental difficulty, and avoid any open clash with Zaghlul. I had put myself in close personal touch with Adly Pasha Yeghen, who seemed the Prime Minister most likely to be acceptable to Zaghlul as an alternative to himself, and found him not unhopeful that Zaghlul might refuse the Premiership and allow him to form a Cabinet in his place. The trouble was twofold: first, Zaghlul might be visited by a fresh wave of megalomania as a result of the elections: second, Zaghlul's professions could never, as Adly Pasha was well aware, be relied upon in the least.

The result of the elections was finally known on May 25: the Wafdist Party under Zaghlul secured 144 seats out of a total of 201 for which elections were completed. Of their allies, the Liberals secured 28 seats, several of which even were due to Wafdist indulgence, and the Watan 5: 17 seats were won by Independents and 7 by Ittehadists. Zaghlul was once again in control of the constitutional government. We waited anxiously to hear from Adly what effect this triumph was having upon the Pasha's attitude. On the evening of the 26th Zaghlul was for an Adly Ministry; on the morning of the 27th he was

for taking office himself in spite of all the previous assurances he had given. This sudden change did not surprise everybody, it was indeed what some of us had expected: the evidence of his own personal power had overcome the promptings of his judgment. Most unfortunately, too, on the same day that the Election results were announced, the Court, which had been trying those of his colleagues who were charged with complicity in the Sirdar's murder, announced its verdict of acquittal. It seemed on the face of it improbable, therefore, that direct intervention by the British Government could now be avoided. On the 27th I had an audience with the King, who showed himself by no means reluctant to leave the battle with Zaghlul to be fought by us. I was left with the impression that His Majesty did not intend to pull our chestnuts out of the fire for us, but that he would view our declaration of war upon Zaghlul without intolerable pain. The Liberals, were clearly anxious to avoid a Zaghlul Ministry, and had decided that they could not enter such a Ministry themselves. These were encouraging factors and we were also now fortified by the knowledge that His Majesty's Government were prepared to veto Zaghlul's return to office. But it was not proposed to use that veto except as a last resort. Zaghlul had not yet publicly announced his determination to take office, and there was still hope that he might be recalled to a more sensible frame of mind, especially as on the 29th he had had a message conveyed to me intimating that he would welcome an invitation to meet me.

On the 29th, therefore, I invited him to the Residency. The conversation which took place was not, perhaps, encouraging in its terms. I carefully reviewed the dangers of disturbing the confidence, alike

of officials and of foreign residents, and attempted to picture to him the shock to British public opinion which would result from his acceptance of office at this stage. Zaghlul Pasha replied that he had always understood that His Majesty's Government desired friendly relations with Egypt: and that as Egypt and Zaghlul were synonymous, he was at a complete loss to understand why he was not welcome as Premier. When it was pointed out that nothing in his public utterance was of a nature to restore the confidence of British opinion, and that the speeches and writings of his supporters had, on the contrary, been extremely hostile, he contented himself with the reply that we must trust him completely, and all would be well. Such arrogant and provocative language made it essential to prepare for action and for all the results that might follow it. I therefore drew up for the approval of the Secretary of State the draft of a communication to be made to Zaghlul. And in order to prevent a possible repetition of the grave rioting and loss of life of 1921 I suggested the despatch of a battleship to Alexandria.

Everything depended on whether our estimate of Zaghlul's character had been a correct one, and as to this I remained confident. Zaghlul had retired to bed and demanded solitude after his interview. He was, at any rate, giving himself leisure for reflection, and his followers were showing considerable symptoms of uneasiness as a result of his visit to the Residency. This move in the right direction was very much accelerated by the resignation of Judge Kershaw from his service, on the ground of his disagreement with the verdict of acquittal in the trial of those who were accused of Sir Lee Stack's murder. Disagreeing with his colleagues, Judge Kershaw held



that the verdict in the case of four of the accused, of whom Ahmed Maher was one, was "so much against "the weight of evidence as to amount to a grave mis-"carriage of justice". Holding this view, he could not reconcile it with his conscience to retain his post, and at great personal sacrifice resigned an honourable and promising career.

The resignation, which was announced on June 2, gravely shocked the confidence of the Wafd in the impregnability of their position, and the same afternoon came the news that H.M.S. *Resolute* was on her way to Alexandria.

On the following day a banquet was to be given to Zaghlul Pasha at the Continental Hotel, at which it was inevitable that he should make public declaration of his intentions. Time was short and telephonic pandemonium now broke loose. The Wafd were disheartened by the firm appearance of the forces against them, and were very anxious to persuade their leader not to engage in a fight for which they had no stomach. They were roundly opposed to running any risks of losing their hard-won seats in the Legislature and the other substantial perquisites of political endeavour, and spent long hours at the telephone shrilly acquainting their colleagues with the exact degree of their own apprehension. The Liberals were not so frankly greedy as their allies, but they knew better how precarious were the foundations of constitutionalism in the sands of Egypt; they were dismayed at the possibility of a dissolution, to be followed by a further suspension of their beloved Constitution, and a further drift towards the autocracy which is the natural fate of Eastern countries. We could therefore await the banquet in a comparatively tranquil frame of mind,

knowing that from all sides pressure was being put upon Zaghlul to do what we desired him to do: and that even if I wanted to intervene I should hardly be able to get at him for the press of his own compatriots!

On June 3, at 1 P.M., the guests assembled for the fateful banquet. The play that was then enacted was somewhat pathetic, but did credit to actors and stage management alike when it is remembered how little time had been left for rehearsal. In the opening scene, a strong chorus carefully drilled and drawn from the leaders of all parties to the coalition, sang the praises—somewhat anodyne and non-committal—of the hero of the day. After the applause had died down, a super came forward rather unexpectedly and spoke a few lines urging that hero not to overstrain his health by undertaking the cares of office, but rather to conserve and cherish it in the interests of the Fatherland. To Zaghlul's immense surprise this counsel was greeted with overwhelming and most significant applause. The speech he had prepared was useless. It was some moments before he appeared able to grasp what had happened. He then rose and hesitatingly referred to the precarious state of his own health, and his natural disinclination for power; he stated that for him, in this case as always, the will of the people must decide, and that he would leave it to the Deputies to resolve whether he should assume the Premiership or not. The Deputies needed no further urging; the choice between their seats and their loyalty was already made and now vociferously proclaimed. Zaghlul was thrown right out of his stride. Instead of rising to accept the decision, he said to Adly Pasha, who was sitting next to him: "I am too weak to reply, let someone speak for me". No one did so, and the meeting broke up.

The tension which had existed for a fortnight was now at length dissipated: and the relief which was generally felt on all sides found wide expression among the public and in the Press. As far as British policy was concerned, the worst obstacle had been surmounted, and without overt intervention. It now remained only to infuse Adly Pasha with the necessary determination to undertake the formation of a Cabinet. His doubts in regard to taking this step had been much enhanced by Zaghlul's bewildering changes of mind, and it was not possible to resolve them without inviting Zaghlul again to the Residency and getting him to commit himself before me to definite assurances of his support of an Adly Ministry. It was a very different Zaghlul who presented himself, in response to my second invitation, on June 5. At our previous meeting he had been arrogant and provocative: now his tone was courteous and conciliatory. He assured me without qualification that he had definitely decided never to take office again in any circumstances: he promised to do all in his power to establish and maintain friendly relations with the British Government, and to extend to Adly Pasha's Ministry the full support of his party. The same afternoon he was received in audience by the King, to whom it is believed he held much the same courteous and moderate language. Heartened by the results of these interviews, Adly Pasha accepted the King's invitation to form a Government, and the crisis was in all major aspects terminated.

Only one point remained in dispute, and the moment seemed propitious for securing upon it a decision favourable to the future of good relations. Zaghlul pressed strongly for the inclusion in the Cabinet of his lieutenant, Mustapha Nahas Pasha. But

the latter had always stood for a policy of uncompromising hostility to Great Britain and the British connexion, and it was evident that much of the good recently achieved would be lost if he took office in the new Ministry. At present he would undoubtedly work against an understanding, and had still not learnt the lesson that hostility to Britain was incompatible with Egyptian progress. When the composition of the Ministry was finally announced on June 7, his name was not included. The new Ministry contained three Liberals and seven Wafdists, but for the moment at any rate Zaghlul was in a chastened frame of mind and would restrain his following, so that there was good hope for the immediate future.

In the comparative quietude of the ensuing days, there was almost for the first time in recent months opportunity to sit back and attempt to estimate what had been done, and to assess the various incidents of the past few months at their true value. Looking back, it seemed that there was good ground for the conclusion that the policy which had recently been pursued had justified itself so far.

It was of course impossible to ignore that Zaghlul's present mood was more than likely to be transitory, but it was of no use to go out to meet trouble. For the moment we were in a fair way to advancing the aims of both Egyptian and British policy. The constitutional régime had been restored and the restoration had been followed by a Government in which Moderate and Anglophile influences had a very considerable share. Also, up to the present it had not been found necessary for the British Government to intervene in the internal administration. I had let the wishes of that Government be known to the protagonists, and when they sought my advice I had given to it all, but

no more than, the weight which traditionally attached to the office of His Majesty's representative in Egypt. In the event, Zaghlul had surrendered, not, as far as appearances went, to the wishes of His Majesty's Government, but to the unanimously expressed desire of his own followers.

The one point upon which it had been found necessary to make a public declaration of the attitude of His Majesty's Government had been in regard to the verdict upon those charged with complicity in the murder of the Sirdar, and it is essential that the facts of this matter should be correctly and fully understood. The incidents which led up to the dastardly attack upon Sir Lee Stack have been fully described in a previous chapter. Subsequent investigations revealed strong *prima facie* evidence of the complicity of the members of the Wafd party in that crime. Two of those arrested and put on their trial as a result of these investigations were Ahmed Bey Maher, Minister of Education in Zaghlul's 1924 Government, and Nekrashi Bey, under-Secretary for the Interior in the same administration. These men were tried by a Court of Assize in Cairo, consisting of judge Kershaw, as President, and two Egyptian judges. The verdict of the Court, which was delivered on May 25, 1926, acquitted all the accused with the exception of one. On June 2, 1926, Judge Kershaw wrote as follows to the Minister of Justice:

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I regret to have to inform your Excellency that, after a deliberation with my colleagues lasting five days, I find myself unable to agree with the judgement given in the case of Mohamed Fahmy Ali and others, except as regards Mohamed Fahmy Ali (condemned to death), Mohamed Fahmi-el-Nekrashi

(acquitted) and Abdel Halim-el-Biali (acquitted). Against the two last names the evidence was insufficient.

The remainder of the judgement was that of my colleagues.

In my view the judgement of acquittal in the cases of Mahmoud Osman Mustafa, El Hag Ahmed Gadalla, Ahmed Maher and Hassan Kamel-el-Shishini is so greatly against the weight of evidence as to amount to a grave miscarriage of justice.

So serious in my opinion is this miscarriage of justice, and so grave the dangers that might result from the verdict, that I considered it my duty to disregard on this occasion the principle that the secrets of deliberation must not be revealed, and consequently, after pronouncing the judgement, I proceeded at once to the Residency and informed His Excellency the High Commissioner of my opinion in his capacity of protector of foreigners in Egypt.

Before doing so I had realised that this technical breach of my duty as a judge entailed my placing my resignation in your hands. I also felt that it would not be right for me to do so until the judgement had been prepared and had been signed. The judgement was completed by my colleagues yesterday and signed by me in accordance with the law. There is now therefore no impediment to my sending you my resignation. Although the course I have chosen must involve me in very considerable financial loss, and I am not a rich man, I feel on my conscience that I must dissociate myself with the acquittals as aforementioned, and I have no alternative but to place my resignation in your hands.

I can assure your Excellency that, after my long period of service with the Egyptian Government, and considering the many friends I have made here, it is with the greatest pain and regret that I find myself forced to sever my connection with Egypt.

I have, etc.,

J. F. KERSHAW.

It will be seen from the above letter that Judge Kershaw, immediately after delivering his verdict, had personally acquainted me with his views upon the result of the trial. At the time, and holding the position

I held, I could not help him in the anxious problem which faced him, I was only able to tell him that I could give him no advice and could bear no shadow of responsibility for any action which his conscience as a judge might induce him to take. I am glad now to be able to pay a public tribute to the courage and the regard for judicial integrity which guided him in the difficult decision which fell to his lot to take. The service which he rendered to the cause of justice in Egypt was very great.

On the same day I addressed, under the instructions of His Majesty's Government, the following note to the Prime Minister of Egypt:

SIR,

CAIRO, *June 2nd, 1926.*

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that, on the day on which the judgment of the Assize Courts in the case of Mohamed Ahmed Ali and others was pronounced, I received the following letter from Judge Kershaw, the President of the Court:

"The Cairo Assize Court over which I have the honour to preside has to-day given judgment in the criminal conspiracy case acquitting all the accused with the exception of Mohamed Fahmy Ali, who has been condemned to death unanimously.

"I regret that I must dissociate myself from the verdict of acquittal except in the cases of Nekrashi Bey and Abdel Halim-el-Biali (against whom the evidence is insufficient), and I have so informed my colleagues.

"In my opinion the verdict of acquittal in the cases of Mahmoud Osman, El Hag Ahmed Gadalla, Ahmed Bey Maher and Shishini is so much against the weight of evidence that I refuse to take any responsibility for the judgment, which is that of my colleagues."

2. Loyal to his duty as a judge, Mr. Kershaw, having once heard the case, was unwilling to take any official steps until he had signed the judgment, as president, in accordance with the rules of the Criminal Procedure Code, but he has to-day handed

to His Excellency the Minister of Justice his resignation of his post as Judge of the Native Court of Appeal as a protest against this verdict, which he considers in the case of four of the accused to have been a gross miscarriage of justice.

3. Your Excellency will fully appreciate the gravity of the step which Mr. Kershaw as an upright magistrate has felt himself compelled to take. In view of his long experience in the Egyptian Courts, his well-balanced judgment and his complete impartiality, of which your Excellency is fully aware, His Majesty's Government feel bound to reserve their own judgment in relation to the conclusions of the court.

4. I have consequently been directed to inform you that, whatever may have been the reasons which induced the two Egyptian judges to come to their decision, His Majesty's Government as at present advised decline to accept it as proof that the four persons mentioned above are innocent of the charges made against them.

5. I am glad to recognise that your Excellency's Government has throughout the investigations given every assistance to the praiseworthy efforts of the police and Parquet to discover and prove the guilt of the persons involved in the conspiracy to commit the long series of political murders which have taken place in this country during the last six years, but I must point out to your Excellency that the effect of this judgment must be to endanger the safety of foreigners in Egypt, for which His Majesty's Government retained responsibility at the time of the proclamation of Egyptian independence and upon which they based the demands made and accepted after the murder of Sir Lee Stack.

6. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government must reserve complete liberty to take such steps as the future may show to be necessary for the discharge of the duty thus incumbent upon them.

I avail, etc.,

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

This grave warning was rendered essential by the steps which Judge Kershaw had felt impelled to take. In view of that step, the accused must remain



under suspicion of complicity and the impression must inevitably be created that in Egypt no justice existed adequate to protect the lives of foreigners. His Majesty's Government must, therefore, again unequivocally assert their responsibility and their determination to discharge it. The effect of this declaration was excellent, and very marked upon the critical political situation which then existed. But the declaration was in no sense interference with Egypt; it was nothing more or less than a firm reminder of a policy declared in 1922 and of a determination to adhere to it. As such it could not fail to be salutary.

## CHAPTER XI

### ADLY PASHA IN OFFICE—SAAD ZAGHLUL IN POWER

THE summer of 1926 opened quietly enough after the alarms and excursions of the spring. The Cabinet over which Adly Pasha Yeghen presided was not to be considered wholly unsatisfactory in its composition. The Department of the Interior, the storm-centre as far as internal affairs were concerned, was in the safe hands of the Prime Minister himself, while Foreign Affairs were entrusted to Sarwat Pasha, in whose moderation and friendliness considerable confidence could be placed. The Department of Justice, the second line of defence for the integrity of internal administration, was in charge of Ahmed Zaki Abul Seoud Pasha, who had no strong party affinities but was reputed to be sensible and honest. But there were danger-spots elsewhere. Morcos Hanna Pasha at the Ministry of Finance was the victim of an anti-British complex, and in view of that Department's potentialities in regard to foreign officials, there was ground there for anxiety. Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, in charge of communications, was the dark horse of the Ministry—a man of great ability and strong ambitions, with a history of intense extremism behind him—there was no telling in which direction he might steer his future course. Mahmoud Pasha came of a Sayidi family, the son of a highly respected and in-

fluent landowner near Assiout. He had for long been one of the most interesting figures in Modern Egypt: after a popular and successful career at Balliol, he had been specially selected for a post in the administration by the then Adviser to the Interior, Colonel Machell. The unfortunate incident in his administrative career which has been already described, contributed very largely to his entry upon extreme courses, but with him extremism was not a settled conviction. The remainder of the Cabinet were Zaghlul's men with definite extremist tendencies, but they were not men of outstanding ability, and their attitude would depend upon that of the leader of their party. Nor did they have charge of Departments in which they could work a great deal of mischief: only Ali Shemsi Bey at the Ministry of Education had a promising field for the creation of trouble, and for the present he was showing a tendency to swim with the tide of moderation.

The key of the situation was held by Adly Pasha, who was in many respects well qualified for such a responsibility. Sprung from an old Macedonian family, and with the blood of Mahomed Ali in his veins, he had been educated, like so many of his class, in France and Turkey, and had graduated in politics as the private secretary of the great Nubar Pasha. It will be recalled that he had been a prominent member of Hussein Rushdi Pasha's cabinet during the War, and that subsequently he had played a leading part in inducing Zaghlul to negotiate with Lord Milner. In 1921 he had undertaken his first premiership, the history of which has been already recorded in this volume. As might be expected from his origins, he was of an autocratic temperament, not easily tolerant of opposition, and not easily influenced by public

opinion. Honest, proud, and reserved, thoughtful and deliberate, he had all the attributes of a great gentleman and some of the attributes of statesmanship. His defect was a natural laziness, from which he roused himself only occasionally to energy. He could not therefore always be depended upon in a crisis, but he was widely respected and influential.

It is instructive to set against his portrait that of Morcos Hanna Pasha, the most able of his Wafdist colleagues. The son of a Coptic priest, he received the foundations of his education in Egypt, with a finishing course in Paris. He had then built up a lucrative position as an advocate. In politics he had been one of the earliest members of the Nationalist Party as a supporter of Mustapha Kamel, its real founder. After the War he had thrown in his lot with Zaghul; in 1922 he was in conflict with the British military authorities, and later in the year he was sentenced to death for seditious activities, escaping with a commuted sentence of seven years' penal servitude and finally with release in May 1923. Intelligent, and with agreeable manners, he held a position of considerable influence in his community; but neither toleration nor breadth of view were among his special attributes, nor had they controlled his public activities. The old Cromerian Egypt and the new were here side by side.

Parliament met to hear the King's Speech on June 10. The speech was studiously moderate in tone and was well received: the Deputies with Zaghul to preside over them were now embarked upon their legislative duties in an atmosphere favourable to reasonable discussion. Zaghul Pasha was the controlling force, and from him I had received categorical assurances that the Government would be fully supported, and that he personally would see to it that

controversial questions were not raised in debate. That he had the power to carry out this assurance was very soon apparent. His mastery over the Deputies was abrupt and unquestioned—when anyone among them became over-insistent in speech or question, Zaghlul simply shouted to him "*Iskut*", and that deputy meekly sat down. On one occasion several members who had tabled private bills were absent when the moment came for their discussion: Zaghlul at once ordered that the discussion of these bills should be postponed *sine die*. If a quorum was not present, Zaghlul's method was to suspend the session and walk into the lobby. There he read a rough lecture to the lounging Deputies, and then, returning to the presidential chair, rang his bell. Whereupon the Deputies hastened to their places with the chastened mien of truant schoolboys.

At the opening of the session he faithfully carried out his promise to me, and ruthlessly closed discussion whenever it threatened to get on to dangerous grounds. I therefore felt that I could pay my annual visit to London without undue anxiety as to what might happen during my absence, particularly as I had complete confidence in the capacity of my deputy, Mr. Nevile Henderson,<sup>1</sup> to appreciate accurately any situation that might arise. I was fully aware, of course, that beneath the surface, apparently so little troubled, there were currents at work which might at any time cause a violent commotion.

In particular it was inevitable that the new Parliament should deal with the measures enacted by Ziwar Pasha's Government during the recent unconstitutional régime, and it was equally inevitable that by such action the authority of the King, who

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Nevile Henderson, H.M. Minister at Belgrade.

had signed the decrees then enacted, and the attitude of His Majesty's Government should be called in question. The battle was not long in developing. A Committee was very promptly set up to deal with this question, and in August it reported its view that all decrees enacted during the period of dissolution of Parliament were null and void, but that in order to prevent disorder Parliament could, and should, maintain their effects while declaring their nullity. It also recommended that legislation should be undertaken providing penalties for such unconstitutional action by Ministers in the future. The problem was a difficult one. The solution propounded by the Committee seemed to have little or no bearing upon practical facts. But any protest would have involved such a maze of legal and constitutional arguments that it would probably have led nowhere. In regard to penal legislation for the future, the matter was on a very different footing. But even though the Chamber might adopt the Committee's report, the necessary legislation could be prevented, and prevented by means less stern than official intervention. So long as the Prime Minister and the President of the Chamber remained moderate and amenable to reason there was little to fear from legislation. And in this direction there was real danger of disturbance from the attitude of the King. His Majesty was at little pain to conceal his dislike of Parliament, and consequently of a constitutional régime. His embarrassing elation earlier in the year at the prospect of a combat *à outrance* between Zaghlul and the British Government has already been described. Now that that quarrel had been composed, he could not resist the temptation to foment another. The royalist newspapers at the time

of the crisis did not cease to taunt Zaghlul Pasha with yielding to pressure from the British, obviously hoping by this means to stiffen Zaghlul's resistance, and make a peaceful solution impossible. And from the moment that Parliament commenced its session, the policy of these papers had been to goad the Deputies into an indiscretion which the British Government could not overlook. Moreover the King himself was not over-discreet in his utterances, and on more than one occasion used in conversation disparaging language about his Prime Minister. Unfortunately also, that astute politician Sidky Pasha was using his opportunity as President of the Finance Commission of the Chamber to attack the royal expenditure. Zaghlul could prevent attacks upon the King, but when the royalist newspaper *Ittehad* in one issue threatened Parliament with dissolution if it attacked the King, and in the next taunted the House with its fear of dissolution, it was hardly likely that Zaghlul would remain patient for long.

Upon such lines, only too well known in the East, did the activities of the political protagonists run. However near to a reasonable frame of mind this or that leader might be brought by careful handling, behind the scenes such a web of tortuous intrigue was being woven, so many politicians were busy troubling the waters to improve the chances of their fishing, that nothing could long remain stable or certain. Indeed it was not for long that the Wafd rested content with the situation. They were not unnaturally determined to use their parliamentary power to improve their political position, and the first measure they proposed to this end was to enact that Omdehs of villages should in future be appointed by direct election. The proposal could

plausibly be advocated as an attempt to foster the principles of local self-government. In reality it was a hardly concealed attempt to secure for the dominant political party the decisive influence of the local official in each village. For the proposal was that only the persons enfranchised for parliamentary elections should have votes for the election of the Omdeh. The election was bound, therefore, to be purely political, and an Omdeh once elected on a Zaghlulist ticket could safely be trusted to see that his village voted for a Zaghlulist Deputy. The consequences upon the system of administration could not fail to be disastrous. The Omdeh would snap his fingers at those in authority over him, once they could no longer bring about his dismissal: he would devote his whole attention to gaining the favour of the electorate, and destroying political opponents. Adly Pasha realised to the full the anarchic character of the proposed legislation, but he was little inclined to do battle with Zaghlul. His principal reason for this was that Zaghlul's followers were becoming restive and would genuinely require a sop of some kind. He was therefore inclined to agree to a compromise that the principle of election should be tested out on a limited scale in one district. It was a dangerous experiment in so important a matter; particularly because concession was bound to increase demand, and there was no telling that Zaghlul would not admit a private bill providing for universal election. In fact this was what ultimately happened, and perhaps for the best: for Adly Pasha was thus compelled to take a firm stand, whereupon Zaghlul saw to it that the measure was dropped for a time.

Throughout August the session dragged on, and by the end of that month the Deputies were begin-



ning to feel that they had sufficiently earned their pay for the moment. The adjournment came on September 20, but just before that date an illuminating incident took place, which ended in a fierce discussion between Zaghlul Pasha as President of the Chamber and the Prime Minister, in the course of which both completely lost their tempers. The President was defending the right of the Chamber to give detailed instructions to Ministers as to administrative measures, and the Prime Minister as stoutly denied this right. Zaghlul was compelled to cede in this particular quarrel, but the incident was instructive from two points of view. In the first place, it served to remind Zaghlul that if it came to the possibility of a dissolution and the loss of their pay and opportunities he would not be able to rely upon the support of the Deputies. In the second place, it clearly showed how foreign to the Oriental mind is democratic government. The Egyptian Parliament could not yet realise the distinction between legislative and executive functions, or see any meaning in the theory of ultimate responsibility. To the Eastern mind power means direct and personal power. Until the alternative meaning is absorbed and the old tradition dies, constitutional government cannot have sure foundations, and the danger must always remain that autocracy is the only means of saving the administration from chaos.

Indeed, there was much truth in the comment made in the Egyptian Press that the present Parliament was representative not of the Egyptian nation, but of Saad Zaghlul. The President of the Chamber had during its first session made very clear his intention to impose, by means of his influence in the Chamber, a virtual dictatorship upon the country. It

was in pursuit of this aim that he upheld the right of the Chamber to interfere with the executive authority of the Government. And, thus encouraged, the Deputies had swarmed over the Government offices, reading files, offering advice, even issuing orders, while Parliamentary Commissions drafted their proposals for legislation without the slightest consultation with the Departments concerned. The eagerness of the Deputies to show their power, while satisfying their personal animosities, added to the administrative chaos and afforded an unpleasant spectacle. Not only Ziwar Pasha himself but members of his family were made the objects of persistent persecution: and all officials suspected or known to hold anti-Wafdist views were subject to fierce attempts to hunt them from their posts. Nevertheless, the past session had produced no instance of any attempt to harass His Majesty's Government in debate; and as long as Zaghlul continued in his present frame of mind, it was unlikely that such topics would be publicly raised.

But behind the scenes there constantly proceeded a guerilla warfare, attempting, now at this point, now at that, to undermine the authority of Great Britain, and to take from her the practical means by which she could maintain and discharge the responsibilities which she had reserved to herself in the Declaration of 1922. The most important of these were the British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government. No English authority, and no reasonable Egyptian opinion, had ever disputed the fact that the assistance of British officials would for some time to come be essential to the Government of Egypt. In addition, by reserving responsibility in 1922 for the protection of foreign interests, we had

also reserved to ourselves a share in responsibility for the maintenance of internal order. The Milner Commission, in recommending that Egypt should be declared independent, had based its view in this connexion on the assumption that Egypt would never be unwise enough to get rid of her foreign advisers, an assumption which was immediately and entirely falsified.<sup>1</sup> Experience had clearly shown that Egyptian leaders lacked either the courage or the good sense to fight for any measure which might possibly be construed, however unreasonably, as a betrayal of the ideal of independence. In that case, if we were not to be false to our word and our trust, we must insist as a matter of right upon the retention, with powers undiminished, of that minimum of British officials which appeared to us essential for the discharge of our responsibilities.

It was now becoming urgent that the matter should be finally regulated, for under the scheme agreed upon with the Egyptian Government in 1923, the existing contracts with foreign officials were to terminate in April 1927. Moreover, apart from the actual posts filled by British officials, constant attempts were being made to diminish or else completely to atrophy the functions attached to these posts, and unless we soon made a determined stand against this tendency, we should be creating the very impression that I was convinced we must avoid—the impression that we did not mean what we said in 1922. Everything that I had seen and heard in Egypt during the last twelve months had confirmed my strong conviction that, only with the eradication of that impression, could our policy make headway.

For several months now I had been in correspond-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 31 *ante*.

ence with the Secretary of State on this subject. The view to which I adhered was that the 1922 Declaration must strictly guide our action, and that we must address the Egyptian Government on some such lines as the following: "It is necessary for the preservation of the *status quo* in respect of the subjects reserved under the 1922 Declaration, that certain posts in the administration should be filled by Englishmen. In regard to the remaining posts now held by foreigners, the Egyptian Government is clearly at liberty to fill them with Egyptians, English or other foreigners, but it must be remembered that we have enunciated a Munroe doctrine in regard to Egypt in her own interests, and those interests still require that His Majesty's Government should be consulted before a non-British foreigner is appointed." To take up any other attitude seemed to me to be a dangerous departure from our declared position. The next consideration was one of practical expediency—could we make such a declaration to Egypt, without raising a storm which might wreck the prospects of our policy? The Foreign Office were inclined to take the view that the practical danger of this was serious, but I myself saw no reason to think that our position was in fact so weak as they held it to be. They tended to the opinion that the British Government was in possession of no arguments, except an ultimatum, which could persuade the Egyptian Government either to retain British officials or to refrain from appointing non-British foreigners. My own view was that if we were prepared, and let Egyptians see that we were prepared, to issue the ultimatum which the Foreign Office regarded as our sole weapon, we would not in fact have to use that weapon: and that even if this assumption were wrong,

the use of this weapon would be advantageous in bringing Egypt to a correct understanding of our position, while the discarding of it from considerations of immediate expediency would be fatal to the future of both Egypt and England.

My anxieties upon this head were not lessened by the incidents of the summer of 1926. That able but incalculable statesman, Sidky Pasha, saw fit, in pursuit of some private end which could not be guessed at, to raise in the Finance Commission of Parliament, the question of the Budget provision for two of the key posts, those of Financial and Judicial Adviser. To avoid the raising of this very dangerous topic, pressure had to be brought upon the Commission through Zaghlul by the channel of Adly Pasha. Sidky Pasha had apparently gained his end, for he said no more, but very carefully let it be known that it was under direct instructions from Zaghlul himself that the matter had been dropped. On my return to Cairo in November, I broached this subject of officials with Zaghlul himself, and found that his attitude was inclined to be reasonable. He stated that he considered the retention of British personnel was essential to the welfare of the administration, that he regarded them as more valuable than other foreigners, and would not hesitate to speak and to act accordingly. I could not welcome this declaration with all the enthusiasm I should have liked to accord to it. In the first place, I knew that private conversation was not invariably an accurate forecast of public speaking. In the second place, Zaghlul Pasha at this particular interview clearly had much on his mind the question of the future of the Constitution. Indeed, immediately after his declaration in regard to British officials, he asked me point-blank what my

intentions were in regard to it. I contented myself with pointing out to him that I had blessed it unequivocally in public, and in private I had given considerable help towards its recent resurrection: whether I should still continue to love my adopted child would depend very largely upon its future behaviour.

It was undoubtedly his anxiety for the Constitution (which was giving him so much power), and his fear that a dissolution would deprive him of the peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of his labour, that were causing Zaghlul at this stage to desire friendly relations with the British Government. Adly Pasha agreed with me that such was now his desire, but also agreed that it arose from no change of heart, but from a belief that the Constitution could not be safeguarded without our help. It was brought clearly home to me that I was back in the whirlpool again, when, at an ensuing interview, His Majesty King Fuad was anxious I should realise how greatly during this period of constitutional government Zaghlul was strengthening his hold on the country. Whatever he might say or do, his intentions towards His Majesty's Government were still as dangerous and hostile as ever. It was gratifying to receive these tributes from so many different and conflicting sources to the power and influence which Great Britain still held in Egypt: gratifying also to be confirmed in my opinion that if we remained stable, our example would affect Egyptian leaders. But how long would it be before one or other of them would provoke his neighbour past bearing, and set the whole mixture boiling again?

For the moment, at any rate, the prospects were not unfavourable. Zaghlul had directed the attention

of the Chamber of Deputies away from controversial topics during the last session of Parliament, and although the Chamber had presented some unpleasant aspects, it had contributed a certain amount of constructive work. The debate on the Budget had been conducted with some moderation. True, the Deputies had increased their own salaries from £360 to £600 a year: true, they had evinced unhappy tendencies to interfere in executive functions, and to harass political opponents. But they had refrained from too provocative attacks upon the Palace credits, and had shown some concern for the health and welfare of the nation at large.

Furthermore, their attention was now being seriously distracted from political issues by the growth of a crisis in the cotton-growing industry, which by October had reached considerable proportions, since by that time the continued fall in the price of cotton was reducing the poorer cultivators to undoubted straits. The result was that there was a loud and widespread demand for Government intervention, and also that Zaghlul and the Wafd, as the elected representatives of the people, were being held responsible for the situation, and were losing a large measure of popularity. The Deputies, many of them landlords, were in truth at the bottom of the trouble. They were over-selfish, and refused to reduce or postpone the collection of rents, which were in almost all cases unfairly high. It remained to be seen whether, when the Chamber met again, as it was shortly to do, its members would give their first care to their own pockets, to their political futures or to the interests of their poorer tenants. The question was bound to prove a perplexing one, both for Zaghlul and for the Government. Curiously enough

it was not without embarrassing aspects for the British power. No "declaration" and no "constitution" could unsettle the fellah of Egypt from his established belief that the Residency and the British officials had complete control over the situation still and could come to his rescue, if they wanted to. For the failure or success of the steps taken by the Egyptian Government, the blame or the credit would unfailingly be laid at our door. But in spite of this embarrassing delusion, I did not feel inclined to take a hand. The economic fact underlying the present difficulties was undoubtedly that rents were far too high in proportion to the prices of cotton. At the existing price, the tenant could not hope to clear more than £4 or £5 per feddan on his crop, while the landlord was requiring twice that sum as rent. But if he was left alone, the landlord would almost certainly be forced by economic pressure to make the necessary reduction. He could not afford to have his land untenanted, and that would be the inevitable result of pressing his demand for the existing rent. Of course if the unrelenting cupidity and shortsightedness of the landlords threatened to produce a critical situation, it would be the duty of the British power to intervene. But such a stage had not yet been reached, and it was still possible that the landlords would cease to oppose the facts, and take a longer view of their own interests, before it was too late.

Parliament met again on November 18, and the opening ceremony passed off smoothly enough; although the close observer could discern upon the surface ripples enough to indicate the conflict of currents beneath. The air of detachment which His Majesty King Fuad assumed for the occasion



was indicative enough. Equally marked was the perfunctory nature of the salutes which one or two Ministers gave him as they passed the royal dais. The relations between the constitutional monarch and his constitutional advisers were clearly by no means cordial. Zaghlul, on the other hand, received a vociferous welcome from the Chamber, and was again unanimously elected President. In fact the King and Zaghlul Pasha were once again drifting into a position of definite hostility, and both were concerned to find out what the attitude of the Residency would be. The strength of our position lay in the fact that both were extremely puzzled and anxious over the answer to that question. It was impossible for a politician bred and trained in Egyptian methods to believe that any person, so closely interested in the result of the struggle as the British representative must be, could stand aside and refrain from taking a hand in the great game of intrigue. Yet that was the attitude of His Majesty's Government: and they could not bring themselves to ascribe to this attitude its real motive, but must believe that some deep-laid stroke was being engineered. All their ingenuity was devoted to discovering what this stroke might be, and the longer they failed to find out, the greater apparently became the reputation of Great Britain as a cunning contriver. In reality nothing was being contrived; a definite and declared policy was being steadily maintained, and attention was being secured for it.

I had not to wait long, however, before it became necessary to take fresh action in support of this policy. Election to posts among the various Parliamentary Committees was among the first business to be transacted; Ahmed Maher was returned as Presi-

dent of the Comptabilité Committee, and Nekrashi as Secretary of the Education Committee. As both of these men had been seriously implicated in the conspiracies which led to the murder of the Sirdar in 1924, their nomination as Wafd candidates constituted, if not a deliberate challenge to the British Government, at any rate a dangerous incident which might encourage a further campaign against us. It was doubtful whether Zaghlul had wished for such nominations; the probability was that he had been unable to oppose the extremists in his own party. It was clearly essential that that element should receive no encouragement, and it seemed imperative to warn both Zaghlul Pasha and the Prime Minister that these particular nominations could not but be viewed with grave displeasure by His Majesty's Government. The Secretary of State fully shared my view; the warnings were conveyed, and the manner in which they were received showed that they did not fail to create the desired impression. My relief at this result was the greater because at this very juncture I was especially anxious not to have a disturbed atmosphere in which to begin negotiations on the subject of the retention of British officials. The most threatening danger now was the attitude of the Ittehadist (the King's party) newspapers, which were constantly harassing Zaghlul about his moderate and accommodating attitude towards the British Government. Indeed it became necessary to utter a strong hint that such articles could not but be regarded as evidence of an unfriendly attitude towards Great Britain.

But these vexations were an inevitable ingredient of the game as played in Egypt: and on the whole the year was ending well. The Constitution was estab-

lished, and was working so far with no marked anti-British bias. On the contrary, the Prime Minister and his leading colleagues, while retaining the support of the Wafd, were in cordial and friendly relations with the British representative.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ARMY CRISIS: ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH

THE year 1927 opened to all appearances quietly. Something had been achieved, but it was of course very little in comparison with the task ahead. It would have been the height of foolishness to suppose that Egypt had in so short a space acquired the full knowledge that was essential to a permanent understanding and steady progress. Even if the process of acquisition appeared to have begun, there was no justification for the hope that it would be continuous. The pendulum of political thought was bound to obey its natural laws and to swing backwards at regular intervals. The British task was—not to ignore the fact—but to face it, and strive to ensure that the recurrent backward swing should become by degrees less and less in its intensity. The immediate symptoms seemed to indicate that such a swing would very soon take place. The extreme elements of the coalition were beginning by degrees to forget the lesson of 1924, and to minimise the risks which they might run by provocative action. There was still a large section which argued that the firmness then shown by the British Government was a freak—a throw-back to an earlier age—and not to be regarded as a natural quality. Egypt would get nothing, they said, except by violent measures, and they reinforced the

assertion by reciting the history of 1919 to 1922. As a consequence, the Wafd was beginning to grow restive, and to chafe increasingly at the restraint which Zaghlul Pasha was still trying to impose. We had already seen a definite sign in the elections of Ahmed Maher and Nekrashi, and in this temper it was too much to expect that they would remain inactive during the representations which I had now to make in regard to British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government.

It will be remembered that the conclusion reached upon this question was that it was essential to the full maintenance of the policy to which we had committed ourselves in 1922, that we should insist upon the appointment of British officials to certain important posts. We had reserved to ourselves certain responsibilities in 1922, and the adequate discharge of two at least of these responsibilities would be impossible unless certain posts were in the hands of British officials, and unless appointments of non-British foreigners were made subject to our consent.

Moreover, since existing contracts were due to terminate in a few months, the matter could no longer be delayed. If we made no representations on the subject our case would go by default, we should have abandoned in one most important particular the policy of 1922, and we should have prepared the ground for intransigence in Egypt and surrender in England. I did not reach this conclusion without the gravest anxiety: I had no desire to disturb the situation if disturbance could by any means be avoided: least of all did I desire to give any colour to the charge that we were unwarrantably interfering with the independence we had granted to Egypt. But the more I considered the question, the more I became

convinced that His Majesty's Government were bound by the Declaration of 1922, and that the only honest course was to ensure that that declaration was carried out.

As to the action that was necessary to this end, it seemed to me that what we wanted was that certain posts should be secured in British hands for at least a decade ahead: that the exact functions attaching to these posts should be clearly laid down: and that they should be filled by the best men procurable. With this as our goal, it seemed to me that the best way to proceed would be to avoid a collective and sudden demand, which it would be difficult for the Ministry to accept without arousing the hostility of the extremists, but rather to take department by department. So much we could do to help those who were friendly to us: for the rest we must be firm and definite in our demands, and deal with the most essential departments first. I was prepared to see these demands arouse opposition, and possibly create a storm, for I knew how unstable were Zaghul's assurances, and how restive his followers might become; but against this possibility I could reckon upon the assurances of the Prime Minister that he would do his best to help negotiations upon these lines, and upon Zaghul's undoubted anxieties in regard to the Constitution which might lead him even to conclude that in order to avoid danger in that quarter our demands must be accepted.

In regard to the necessity of action, and to the principles governing such action, the Secretary of State was in general agreement with me; more debatable ground, however, was reached when it came to the consideration of what our detailed demands should be in each department. The method selected for the

formulation of these demands was to hold an informal representative meeting of the High Commissioner's official advisers and of British experts concerned, to examine each individual post, and to decide against the retention of any British or foreign official whose place could possibly be taken by an Egyptian without serious detriment to interests for which we had undertaken responsibility. But although it seemed to me that by this method we could hardly fail to arrive at the essential minimum which it was necessary to secure, the Foreign Office were regarding the matter from a different standpoint. Indeed, in the course of the long correspondence which followed, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that although we were both nominally standing for the same policy, we were in reality regarding that policy from very different points of view. The figures which were advanced from Cairo as essential, London was inclined to regard with misgiving. The fact that these figures had been most carefully tested in the light of practical experience did not appear to weigh with them so much as the fact that to unenlightened or ill-informed opinion they would appear difficult to justify. For London demonstrable necessity meant a necessity which those ignorant of the special conditions of the Egyptian problem would accept; for Cairo it meant almost exactly the opposite—a necessity which was dictated by the special conditions of the Egyptian problem. The Secretary of State's advisers very clearly disliked the idea of taking up a firm attitude on this subject, and their dislike began to show itself in the tone of the despatches I received. In place of the full support tempered only by helpful suggestion which I had been receiving, there began to arrive qualified assurances of agreement, coupled with warn-

ings as to the grievances which Egyptians might entertain at the employment of Englishmen, and the dangers of pressing the Egyptian Government on this matter. It was in vain that I sought to impress upon the Secretary of State that without full reference to him no action would be taken which might alienate the Egyptian Government. It was further pointed out that since the general lines of policy were agreed, I might be trusted with a large measure of liberty in negotiation, especially as it was impossible to acquaint him with all the factors which must influence decision in regard to each individual post. The nervousness remained, and I was requested to be careful to make as full reference as possible to the Secretary of State in regard to all the points concerned.

Looking back in the light of after events, it is natural, perhaps, that I should ask myself why it was that the Foreign Office were visited with such grave anxieties on a matter which, while it presented no abnormal difficulties, was yet of extreme importance for the maintenance of our declared policy, especially in regard to the welfare of the people. The information supplied to them was very full and reached them for consideration long before action was to be taken. Moreover, it had not been suggested to His Majesty's Government that any large demand should be made upon Egypt to this end. It was only in regard to five Ministries—those of Communications, Education, Finance, War, and Justice—that I reported any necessity for action, and even in those Ministries a large number of their departments were excluded from the proposals. The basic fact with which we had to contend was that although the Milner Commission and the 1922 Declaration had assumed that an independent Egypt would not be so foolish as to con-



template any substantial reduction of European officials, yet an independent Egypt had in fact reduced the number of officials by over 50 per cent. in four years. In face of these figures it is interesting to recall the conclusion which the Milner Commission reached on this subject: "No sensible Egyptian seriously wishes to dispense with foreign aid . . . any general or rapid displacement of the British and other foreign officials is not to be anticipated." The resulting deterioration in efficiency was admitted by all observers to be marked and widespread. But however much we might deplore this, I was determined not to intervene, and did not in fact suggest intervention, unless the reservations made in 1922 absolutely demanded it. The maintenance of a reasonable standard of law, of order, and of facilities for commerce was a matter for which we had undertaken responsibility, and every proposal that was made in regard to British officials was the outcome of considered agreement among experienced advisers, and was dictated by a reasoned conviction that without British assistance the necessary maintenance would be in danger.

That there should have been any indication of a divergence of view was especially unfortunate, because at this moment a question of even greater importance and urgency thrust itself forward and demanded instant action—the question of the Wafd's policy in regard to the Egyptian Army, a policy which was drawing rapidly nearer to accomplishment. Matters were not made easier during the swift development of this problem by a sudden crisis in the Egyptian Cabinet. The immediate circumstances of this crisis were curiously trivial. In the opening discussion upon the Budget a suggestion was made that

the Ministry should be thanked for the encouragement it had extended to the Bank Misr. A motion to that effect was moved and rejected by a large majority. Leading members of the Wafd immediately spoke to the effect that this vote did not imply any lack of confidence, but the Prime Minister, Adly Pasha, who had been absent from the session, at this point arrived in the Chamber with several of his colleagues, and announced that the vote left the Ministry no alternative but to resign. The next morning, April 18, he duly tendered his resignation to the King, and adhered to it obstinately. It was clear enough that something more than this had been taking place behind the scenes, and it was not long before I was in possession of information which illuminated the whole incident. It then appeared that the Minister of War had been pressing upon the Prime Minister his projects for the final accomplishment of the Wafd's army policy, and that he had brought in to support him Ahmed Maher and Nekrashi at the head of the extremists. Even Zaghlul, to whom the Prime Minister appealed, had taken the side of the extremists, and pronounced in favour of an aggressive policy. The result had been the resignation of Adly Pasha, rather to the consternation of Zaghlul and the more moderate Wafdists, who were not yet prepared to join battle on such an issue. So little were they inclined for internecine strife that they put forward Sarwat Pasha as an acceptable Prime Minister, and even agreed to the conditions which he laid down as essential to him. With Sarwat Pasha's acceptance of the Premiership I was relieved of all necessity for interference. It only remained for me to listen in silence to the consistent and instructive comments of His Majesty upon Zagh-

lul, upon his new Prime Minister, and finally upon the Parliamentary system in Egypt, and the merits of the Egyptian Constitution.

But if in negotiations in regard to officials and during the Cabinet crisis I had been able to refrain from disturbing intervention, it seemed impossible that the same fortune would attend me in regard to the Army question, for here there was no doubt that Zaghlul supported by the whole Wafd party would be much more inclined to fight, and it would be a difficult task to manœuvre them out of their position without firing a shot. Their policy on this matter was an instructive indication of their point of view towards us, and of the methods they thought most profitable. That we should have a voice in controlling Egyptian Army policy and also in promoting its efficiency was clearly essential under the terms of our 1922 policy. We had declared that we would take all the measures necessary to safeguard our imperial communications, that we were responsible for the protection of foreign interests, and of Egypt against foreign aggression, and that for these purposes the *status quo* must be maintained until agreement could be reached. But ever since 1922 the Wafd had been steadily pursuing a policy of undermining the *status quo*, until in 1926 we were faced with the prospect of an Egyptian Army, much increased in strength, and not only removed from any possibility of control by us, but saturated as the result of intensive propaganda with the political influence of an extreme political party. We were ourselves, as it appeared to me, largely to blame for this state of affairs, for we had never made any attempt to put a stop to the gradual but steady erosion of the position which our policy bound us to maintain. British officers in the

higher commands had been very soon replaced by Egyptians, and in 1922 the Minister of War had been busy removing minor questions from the purview of the Sirdar, and bringing them under his direct control. The next step had been direct interference with the Sirdar's disciplinary powers. In March 1924, Shahin Bey, an officer who was unpopular with the Wafd, had been placed on pension, as a political concession to the extremists, and this had had a profound effect upon the whole position. Then came the Sirdar's murder, but even thereafter we did nothing to arrest the dangerous movement. In January 1925 we allowed an Army Council to be formed which promptly arranged that the appointment and promotion of officers should no longer be submitted to the King through the Sirdar, but should be made dependent upon an Officers' Committee, and submitted by them to His Majesty through the Minister of War. In the spring of 1925 the Frontiers Administration, the Departments of Recruiting and Supplies, and the Finance Department, passed completely under political control, and the Minister of War and his partisans were doing much to suborn the allegiance of the officers and to bring them under the influence of the political caucus. The objective of the extremists was now becoming more than clear—they were pressing this campaign because they desired an anti-dynastic revolution, and they were screening this ultimate purpose behind the popular demand for complete independence. On the resumption of Constitutional Government in 1926, the campaign was renewed with vigour. Under extremist pressure and having received no warning signals from the British authorities, Kashaba Bey, the Minister of War, was now on the point of presenting to Parliament pro-

posals for increasing the trained reserve, increasing the establishment, abolishing restrictions upon the carriage of arms, and creating a military air force; while at the same time he was more and more disregarding the British Inspector-General, refusing his recommendations, corresponding direct with his subordinate officers, inspecting units, and apportioning the duties of the Headquarters Staff without reference to him.

I had been for some considerable time very seriously impressed with the gravity of this situation. It was becoming very clear that if matters were allowed to go any further on the lines planned by the Wafd an unpleasant and perhaps a critical dilemma was reserved for His Majesty's Government. There was an inevitable temptation to avoid the prompt facing of so critical a situation, but reflection showed the alternative to be worse. There was no doubt that if once the Wafd had become satisfied that their control over the Army was complete, they would not hesitate to launch these combined forces in assault against the Monarchy. What other course would then have been open to His Majesty's Government but to support with all the military forces at their command the Monarch they themselves had assisted to the throne, and in so doing to break with their own hands the Constitution for which they had sacrificed so much? At all costs such an issue must be avoided. My own hands had been tied for some time by the necessity of securing an agreed solution of the problem of European officials. As to the Army, matters were very different: for one thing they had gone too far to be pulled back by anything short of a sharp jerk: for another, the whole campaign of the extremists was involved, and they would not easily

permit surrender. There was no need, however, to despair of a successful issue, provided the matter was prudently handled, and I proposed to the Secretary of State that I should be authorised to approach the Egyptian Government on the matter at once, and point out to them that our whole-hearted desire was to have their co-operation in safeguarding our communications, and protecting Egypt from foreign aggression. For this purpose we should like to have the Egyptian Army an efficient modern force forming an integral part of our defence scheme. These objects could not possibly be achieved if the present tendencies to turn the Army into a political machine and to do away with the authority of the Inspector-General were continued. For a friendly settlement it was essential that Egypt should reconsider the position. If she was not prepared to do so, we would be compelled to regard the Egyptian Army as a potential danger to the discharge of our responsibilities, and to take action accordingly. In response to the despatch in which I set forth the whole position for the consideration of the Secretary of State, and asked for the authority above described, I received a telegram stating that His Majesty's Government accepted my proposals. A few days before this, however, there had arrived a letter from the Egyptian Department in the Foreign Office addressed to Sir William Tyrrell<sup>1</sup> who was staying at the Residency and intended to be shown to me.

The question had been the subject of a long and detailed correspondence between myself and the Secretary of State for more than twelve months past. Even before the expiry of Ziwari Pasha's premiership, we had reached agreement with regard

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Tyrrell.

to the course to be adopted on the question of the Sirdarship, but unfortunately the fall of that Cabinet and the return of the Wafd to power had forestalled action. After further correspondence with the Government at home I had been authorised to impress on King Fuad the gravity of the situation which was developing, and to ask him whether he was in sympathy with the proposals for general increases in the strength of the Egyptian Army. I pointed out to the King that His Majesty's Government "had authorised me to ask for a gradual but "definite reduction in the strength of the Egyptian "forces, in accordance with the policy being pursued "in other countries. Could I have an assurance that "the King's influence would be exerted in this direc- "tion? His Majesty replied in the affirmative, but re- "peated that he was practically powerless in existing "political circumstances"<sup>1</sup> The interview described above took place on December 7, 1926, and further detailed discussion took place before I was able on March 3 of the following year to summarise in the despatch quoted in the preceding paragraph, the trend of past events and to make detailed proposals for a definite approach to the Egyptian Government. In subsequent despatches I elaborated my proposal and further explained in detail the facts and the needs which justified them. As a result, on April 13, I received the following telegram from the Secretary of State: "Egyptian Army. His Majesty's "Government accept the proposals contained in your "despatch of 28th of March."

It was thus no sudden policy upon which we were embarking, but one carefully elaborated and long

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, December 12, 1926.

considered. Moreover, Sir William Tyrrell, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had been staying with me during the latter period and my final proposals had been fully discussed with and unreservedly accepted by him, so that I felt assured of the most complete support, knowing the confidence which the Secretary of State reposed in his judgment.

It was startling, therefore, to find that in the letter from the Foreign Office which Sir William Tyrrell now received there was set out a series of arguments directed against the line of action which I had proposed, and which had now just been approved by the Secretary of State.

The letter showed that there was no disposition on the part of the Foreign Office to deny the proposition that erosion of our position in regard to the Army had reached a point at which it could no longer be tolerated, or that it was essential to secure the Army from contamination. But when it went on to discuss the method to be adopted, it revealed a state of mind which caused me considerable anxiety with regard to the future. What was wanted, said the letter, was some provisional arrangement, pending the final agreement in regard to the four reserved points.

So far I was not in disagreement. But the next suggestion was that this arrangement should, if possible, be "some constructive agreement or *modus vivendi* which will fit in with the general policy of "collaboration and not compulsion". Yet from the facts as they were, what possible hope was there of securing even the introduction into Parliament of any proposal involving friendly co-operation on the basis of the 1922 Declaration? There was no Minister who would dare to sponsor it, not even a deputy who



would dare to support it. In such circumstances, agreement could only be reached by receding ourselves from the 1922 Declaration, and admitting that what we then regarded as vital, we were now prepared to abandon. The only possible result of such a step would be a large surrender of our position in Egypt; a surrender which would constitute a definite change of policy. Indeed, the gravest cause for anxiety that I found in this letter was the fact that it actually appeared to contemplate such a change. Even on the most optimistic construction, there were sentences in it which could not but create the impression that the Foreign Office were preparing to envisage a retreat from the policy of 1922. The definition of that policy which the letter propounded was as follows: "It was "to settle by agreement with Egypt the subjects which "in those stormy days were incapable of settlement "and had to be reserved in consequence." It will be seen that this definition omitted much that was of vital importance. It mentioned only the difficulties of settlement and it made no reference to our Imperial interests, to the interests of foreigners, or to the preservation of the *status quo*. This was very far removed from Mr. MacDonald's statement of 1924: "Egypt was *de jure* and *de facto* "a British Protectorate. For reasons of their own "and of their own motion, His Majesty's Government "modified that status and granted a measure of independence." And—more dangerously still—the letter went on: "Now 1922 is a good horse that has carried "us far and well, but we must not ride it to death, and "in any case it won't last indefinitely". How could these sentences fail to convey to the reader the impression that adherence to the Declaration of 1922 was no longer steadfastly contemplated, and that

official opinion in England was now inclining towards a settlement with Egypt at the expense of our responsibilities? I, at any rate, was shaken, for my whole position was based upon the determination to secure the ultimate friendly agreement upon the reserved points which our policy had always contemplated: and I was more convinced than ever that such agreement, fully safeguarding the vital interests of both countries, could only be secured by our rigid adherence to the whole of the 1922 Declaration, since only by such adherence could we hope to bring Egypt to a frame of mind in which reasonable negotiation would be possible. My conviction was that we ought to welcome and encourage any chance of working out the constructive possibilities of the Declaration, but I could not allow myself to be driven into abandoning any of the prohibitions which were implicit in it.

Although this rendered me somewhat uneasy in mind, I had the Secretary of State's full authority, and I went forward upon the lines planned with him. The Prime Minister (now Sarwat Pasha), and the King accepted my first approaches in a friendly and accommodating spirit. The French and Italian Ministers left me in no doubt that they personally and their Governments would accord me the warmest support in the attitude I was now compelled to take up. For days the matter hung in the balance. Zaghlul was now wavering: at one moment there was hope that he would reject extremist counsels and listen to the words of moderation. But finally, towards the end of May, there was little doubt that the extremists were gaining the day. Once the slide had begun, it grew rapid and uncontrolled: the extremists were exultant and proclaiming their determination to resist at all hazards, and popular excitement was fer-

menting. Finally, on May 24, I received a private note from Sarwat Pasha saying that he felt it his duty to put it on record in writing that from a legal point of view the Egyptian Government held that the Egyptian Army did not fall under any of our reservations of 1922, and that consequently Egypt had complete liberty in regard to it. It was clear from this that for the moment the extremists had won the day, and that nothing further was to be gained by the present continuance of private negotiation. On May 31, therefore, I handed to Sarwat Pasha an official note embodying the views and demands of His Majesty's Government, the text of which is set forth in Appendix C.

Meanwhile excitement continued to grow, and I was compelled in view of the possibility of disturbance to request the despatch of a warship to Alexandria as a precautionary measure. That the arrival of this ship might be regarded as a threat was an inevitable consequence, but I was not prepared to risk lives in order to avoid giving that impression, nor did I believe that an indication of a firm and prepared attitude could have any unwholesome effect. For some days thereafter the question of what attitude the Egyptian Government would take hung in the balance, and I thought it best to utilise this interval in preparing our further plans against an unfavourable reply. In detailed despatches I outlined to the Secretary of State the possible developments which I foresaw, and recommended that in the event of an unsatisfactory answer we should pose to the Egyptian Government the simple and definite question: did they accept our Declaration of 1922 or not? If to this question they gave either a negative or an equivocal reply, our next step should be to secure

from the King the suspension of the Chamber, and the formation of a Cabinet of Affairs. To this Cabinet we should present a draft and comprehensive treaty, giving a time limit for acceptance and making clear that the renewal of constitutional life would depend upon acceptance. At the same time I detailed to the Secretary of State the steps which I proposed to take in the event of disorders breaking out at any stage. To all these proposals I received on June 2 the following reply from London:

*Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo)*

(Telegraphic)

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 2nd, 1927*

I agree with you that bilateral settlement, however we obtain it, offers the best and perhaps the only practical method of re-establishing and maintaining our position in Egypt, and I approve generally the plan proposed in your telegram if resort to it proves necessary. I take it that you have considered the danger that the persons concerned might not play the part that you have allotted to them unless at some impossible price. These risks may be unavoidable, but I should be glad to know your views. I reserve judgement as to whether one comprehensive treaty, as contemplated in your telegram, or several specific agreements would prove more convenient and effective. I also agree that circumstances may arise in which we should have no choice but to re-impose martial law and take the measures outlined in your telegram.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ARMY CRISIS: ITS CLIMAX AND SOLUTION

ALL was now in readiness for the receipt of the Egyptian reply. The position was immensely strengthened by the knowledge that His Majesty's Government were in complete agreement as to the plan of campaign proposed. That there were unknown quantities and consequent risks involved was inevitable. But I was not in any degree pessimistic, because I felt that I had secured the one position on which the fate of the engagement would turn—a firm and unyielding attitude upon the part of the British Government. The degree of uncertainty which existed in regard to the situation would be almost entirely removed by unmistakable evidence of our desire to go forward. The wavering elements, whose future attitude might in other circumstances be incalculable, would waver no longer. Even the forces of the opposition would not hold out for long after our determination had been clearly demonstrated. All depended upon that. The extremists' strongest argument in influencing their moderate elements, and a still more moderate Cabinet, was the argument that the British did not really mean to face trouble and would, as before, surrender to threats of violence. If that argument was shown at the outset

to be without foundation, there would be no crisis, and we should get what we wanted. On that point there was no ground for any serious anxiety.

Our note had informed the Egyptian Government of our desire for a friendly agreement covering the whole question of military co-operation, but had unequivocally demanded that pending the negotiation of such an agreement the Egyptian Government should at once give effect to a series of measures regarding the Army which were set out in detail. In other words, we had staked our position upon the acceptance of that unequivocal demand, and no progress could be made in any direction until our position had been secured by its acceptance. On June 3 the reply was received.<sup>1</sup>

It was exactly the reply that anyone conversant with Eastern methods would have expected: its terms were expressly designed for adaptation to any policy that might ultimately have to be followed. It did not accept more than one of our definite demands, but it definitely rejected none of them, and it was so worded as not to exclude the appearance of desiring to maintain the *status quo* or of subscribing to the principle of negotiation. The purpose underlying it was clear enough, and it was cleverly promoted. The burning question for Egyptian politicians was—was the British Government really determined that its demands must be accepted? Until that question was cleared up, they would not take the responsibility of moving. The note was cleverly designed to force us to give the answer. If we replied by insisting on acceptance, then the Government would tell the extremists that they had been wrong, and listen to them no longer. But if our reply lacked

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

definition, then the extremist argument would be strengthened, and as far as we were concerned the position would be weakened.

It was clear, therefore, that to reopen official negotiations upon the receipt of this note would be to take a step both dangerous and unwise. Such action could not fail to give the impression that the British Government found it difficult not to accept the account of the existing position contained in the Egyptian Note, and was not in any case determined to insist upon compliance with the categorical demands set out in its own Note. It was, however, suggested to me from an experienced and intelligent quarter that in spite of the studied evasiveness of the terms in which the Egyptian Note was couched, an undertone could be discovered in them sufficiently suggestive of a desire for conciliation—if not in public negotiation, then, at least, in private conversation. I did not desire to let slip any possible opportunity of securing compliance with our demands, but I was firmly determined to take at this stage no official step which could possibly be construed as a retreat, however small, from the position which we had taken up. To do this would have been a grievous political error, but if the Egyptian Government could be induced to approach us again with terms more nearly conceding our demands, we would be prepared to listen to them. I entertained no very strong hopes as to the success of any attempt on these lines. The Wafd were now in command of the situation on that side, and ample proof had been furnished of the incalculability and intransigence of their leaders. But there was a bare possibility that a solution might thus be achieved, and if not, then the next stage of the official programme would be

reached and we could ask for an immediate assurance that our demands would be complied with. I was confident that this step would give us what we required, and bring the tension to an end without serious difficulty. For our plans had been laid in detail and with extreme care, and although the strain and anxiety of the last few days had been great, there was compensation in the confidence that success was at hand, and that a valuable advance was now to be made, and consolidated.

Almost immediately, however, we received from London telegraphic instructions to call off our demands and to proceed instead to negotiate officially a "provisional agreement". The Secretary of State was at this juncture absent in Geneva, and these orders were received from Mr. Baldwin. My immediate and serious difficulty was that in view of the fact that the policy I was following had been fully considered and agreed upon by the Secretary of State and the Cabinet, I had spoken and acted both officially and privately so as deliberately to give the impression that His Majesty's Government regarded our demands as of supreme importance, and would allow no paltering with them. I had further received assurances from all the representatives of important foreign Powers that they regarded those demands as essential to the maintenance of a safe position in Egypt, and would strongly urge their Governments to afford us complete support in insisting upon them. These foreign Ministers, as well as my own advisers, were all of an identical opinion in regard to the Egyptian reply; that it was deliberately equivocal and could not be accepted as a basis for further negotiations. Knowing all this, knowing the internal political situation and the hopes and fears of



our enemies, what was I now to do upon receipt of orders which were not only a radical departure from the agreed plan but were fraught with danger to the success of British policy?

After careful deliberation I concluded that I must attempt to secure a modification of these orders, and I telegraphed at some length to London pressing with all the force at my command for a reconsideration. I pointed out that in making the specific demands contained in our original note we had already stated our desire to negotiate a provisional agreement, but had insisted that an essential preliminary to such negotiation must be the acceptance of our immediate requirements: that to waive these requirements and then proceed forthwith to negotiation would irretrievably weaken our position and seriously prejudice any chance of successful negotiation. In reply I received a further telegram from Mr. Baldwin elaborating the reasons which had led to the sudden and unexpected orders to retreat: "The test", this telegram said, "must not be sought in an attempt to secure compliance with individual requirements, but in the immediate initialing of the (proposed) agreement. . . . Your action on my instructions will lead to one of two things: either Sarwat will accept the agreement or he will reject it. . . . If, as I fear is probable, he rejects the agreement, he will have rejected the principle of collaboration with us in defence of Egypt, fairly and reasonably offered, and will thereby have revealed the Egyptian Government in their true colours"<sup>1</sup> The logic of this argument was flawless, but it rested upon assumptions for which it was impossible to find any warrant in the actual situation. There was no justification, unfortunately, for assuming

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir William Tyrrell to Lord Lloyd, June 10, 1928.

that Sarwat Pasha would "either accept the agreement "or reject it". It was, on the contrary, almost certain that he would do neither the one nor the other but would procrastinate just as he had done when faced with the original note. If he had succeeded in postponing the acceptance of categorical demands, how infinitely easier it would be for him to postpone acceptance of an agreement, the most important part of which was a highly debatable schedule—while the agreement itself could not have binding force until submitted to the Chamber and ratified by that body. Moreover, Sarwat Pasha himself had actually made it plain to me that it was out of the question to expect from the Egyptian Government any admission of the principle of military co-operation, pending a general negotiation of all the reserved points. And, finally, I could not refrain from entertaining the thought that we had, after joint discussion and collaboration, agreed on June 3 upon the detailed steps which should be taken in the event of an unsatisfactory reply, yet on June 10, when the situation was most critical, Mr. Baldwin was telegraphing to me that he concurred that "the Egyptian Note was "unsatisfactory, capable of almost any interpretation", but in the same telegram he was ordering a radical departure from the steps agreed upon so shortly before and after such careful preparation. Again I telegraphed to London on June 11, urging the force of these considerations.

Meanwhile, with the knowledge and the good wishes of the Residency, unofficial and private efforts were being made to induce Sarwat Pasha and Zaghlul Pasha to step over the gap which existed between the British demands and the terms of the Egyptian reply. At one stage a report was brought in that a

solution had been found, at the next moment the Residency was informed that the attempt had broken down finally. In fact, Zaghlul Pasha was proving as unaccountable as usual, but just at the moment when all hope had been abandoned, it appeared that, whatever their leaders' views might be, influential members of the Wafd were not inclined to let slip the opportunity of conciliation. Once again, Zaghlul had left out of his calculations the material interests of his supporters. They were not yet prepared to take the risk of having to return to the political wilderness, and they insisted that conversations should continue and that a settlement should be reached. After this intervention, Zaghlul Pasha remained aloof but hostile, and took no direct part in the resumed conversations; but by June 11 Sarwat Pasha found it possible to present to me personally a proposed settlement of our differences—a settlement against which Zaghlul Pasha had made it clear that he would not protest. Sarwat Pasha proposed that I should send him a request for a further elucidation of the official reply, and in return he would address to me a second note, still more definite and more favourable. This note, accompanied by categorical verbal assurances given in the presence of the Minister of War and members of my own staff, constituted the concession of all the important demands originally made by us.<sup>1</sup> I repeated these to London recommending immediate acceptance before Zaghlul had time to turn round and before further arguments in favour of a change of plan could be evolved in Whitehall. The next day the necessary notes were exchanged between myself and Sarwat Pasha—and the crisis was at an end. The envoi ran as follows: "From Prime Minister. I

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

“congratulate you heartily on success attending recent negotiations with Egyptian Government on subject of Army control in Egypt. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs telegraphs from Geneva asking to be cordially associated with this message.”

My first feeling when the affair was over was one of astonishment that we should have come off not only without loss, but with so large a measure of the objective which we originally set out to obtain. But as these feelings of not unnatural amazement diminished, the anxious consideration began to obtrude itself as to what had caused the Government at home suddenly to wish to change their carefully considered plans in the very middle of the engagement. That they should have disagreed with the proposals when they were originally made, or that having accepted them they should have been visited by much anxiety as they watched them being put into action, would have been natural and understandable. But surely there could have been no original misunderstanding, for I had in despatch after despatch and telegram after telegram been at pains to set out the situation in every aspect: I had taken into account all the probabilities of development, had detailed one by one the steps in the plan of campaign which I proposed, and had not moved until I had secured the full agreement of the Secretary of State and of the Cabinet. Nor could it have been mere panic that moved the Government to go back upon that agreement—at a moment when with their approval we were fully and irretrievably committed and the battle was at its hottest.

I could not accept either of these alternatives as a possible explanation. In searching for another, my mind was inevitably held by the private telegram which I had received from the Prime Minister soon

after my proposals had been rejected. "Am I right", it ran, "in assuming that you are satisfied that the "time has come to force an issue with the Egyptian "Parliament? If so, a stiffly worded statement on the "Army question might be a good means of doing so; "but it has the disadvantage of being open to miscon- "struction at home and in the world at large. We find "it difficult to believe in the expediency of this course. "An overt break may be unavoidable, and if unavoid- "able must be met without flinching. But if putting "in acceptable language our demands, which cannot "in themselves be acceptable to extremists, would "give any chance of their being adopted by Sarwat, "it seems to me that the attempt should be made. "That is my reason for asking you to propose to "Sarwat the alternative of accepting the military "agreement mentioned in my official telegram."

The suggestion that I had any objective except that of maintaining unimpaired the *status quo* in regard to the Egyptian Army took me completely by surprise. I had never given any advice or made any proposal which had in view any other end than that of maintaining the position which I regarded as essential for upholding the policy of 1922. I re-read with care my telegrams and despatches, and could find in them nothing which could possibly give rise to the impression that I had some other objective at which I was obliquely aiming. If Mr. Baldwin had in fact suddenly come to the conclusion that I had such an objective and was concealing it from His Majesty's Government, he was no doubt justified in recoiling from the plan I had proposed; for clearly I deserved to be sacrificed ruthlessly if I had been guilty of concealing my true intentions. But if that was his sudden impression, how did it come about that my duplicity

had not been recognised before, or that the Foreign Office, who to the best of my knowledge were in agreement with me, had not instantly dispelled this impression on their behalf and on my own? These questions were only finally answered for me when subsequently I had the opportunity of reading a memorandum reviewing the Egyptian Army crisis which as I have every reason to believe was an accurate statement of the contemporary official view.

That document, to which I had access four years later, disclosed to me then, for the first time, that although the Secretary of State had been in agreement with the measures I had proposed for dealing with this question, I had been wrong in believing that his advisers took the same view. The memorandum was dated June 29, a fortnight after the matter had been finally settled and when the Prime Minister and Secretary of State had announced their gratification at the settlement. In order that the matter may be quite clear, it is necessary to recapitulate quite briefly the plan of action which I had put forward and my reasons for concluding that such action was necessary. I had come to the conclusion that the gradual erosion of the *status quo* in the Egyptian Army was fraught with very grave risks of future disaster, and that, to permit it to continue was incompatible with our policy. I had, therefore, proposed that we should make to the Egyptian Government certain demands which would maintain that *status quo* in essentials and guard against future risks. In the event of a finally unsatisfactory answer I had proposed that we should ask the Egyptian Government definitely and clearly whether they accepted the Declaration of 1922, or not. If they replied in the negative, I suggested that we should procure from the King a sus-

pension of the Constitution and the formation of a *Cabinet d'affaires* to which we should present a draft and comprehensive treaty which would settle our relations with Egypt once and for all. What I envisaged and was working for was the extraction of a satisfactory answer from the Government to our first demands, but I felt that the best way to ensure success was to be prepared for failure. My objective was to impress upon Egypt that we were firmly determined to maintain the *status quo* established by the 1922 Declaration, and that nothing was to be gained by attempts to infringe it, and that her own interests could best be served by realising this and acting accordingly.

According to the memorandum to which I have referred, there was a different official objective stated as follows: "to force Egypt to recognise our right to "maintain a garrison in the country for defensive "purposes (and, so, incidentally, to accept the most important of the four points reserved under the Declaration of 1922) and her own obligation to cooperate with "us for those purposes. The High Commissioner, "on the other hand, preferred to insist only upon "certain concrete demands, *e.g.*, as to the rank "and powers of the Senior British Officers in the "Egyptian Army."

It was this objective—clearly much more ambitious and much more difficult of attainment than the one that I had in view—which apparently it had been decided to aim at on receipt of the Egyptian Government's reply. It had not been disclosed to me previously, nor, I must suppose, to the Secretary of State who was absent at Geneva. But it existed, and the Egyptian Government's first reply had been taken as the opportunity to pursue it

and to drop the plan of campaign agreed upon. I had regarded the reply as unsatisfactory and had proposed adherence to the previous demands. "This 'course", says the memorandum, "seemed inexpedient. The Egyptian Note, while it certainly did 'not accept more than one of our requirements, at the 'same time did not definitely reject any of them. Its 'language was ostensibly friendly; it seemed to promise 'the maintenance of the *status quo* . . . and, finally, 'although in deliberately vague phraseology, appeared 'to subscribe to the principle of negotiation." The points about the Egyptian reply which condemned it in the eyes of my advisers and many other experienced critics in Egypt commended it in official quarters, and it was for this reason, I must suppose, that I received instructions from Mr. Baldwin, who had charge of the Foreign Office in the Secretary of State's absence, to call off our original demands and try to negotiate the provisional agreement which was to result in Egypt's recognising "our right to maintain "a garrison in the country".

In view of the history of previous and subsequent negotiations, it is perhaps unnecessary to stress the extreme difficulty which would have attended any attempt to get a constitutionally governed Egypt formally to recognise our right to garrison the country. Indeed, it is almost impossible to understand how such an idea could have been regarded as practicable, and Sarwat Pasha had himself over and over again, made Egypt's attitude plain. The immediate danger that I foresaw and pointed out to the Prime Minister was that to call off our demands at this stage and enter into any official negotiation—however practicable its object—would immensely strengthen the hands of our extremist opponents, and would



tend to stultify our policy of rigid adherence to the *status quo* and the 1922 Declaration.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to discuss the matter further. The plan of concentrating upon the original limited objective proved successful after all, and brought an issue out of the crisis which was welcome alike to Egypt and the British Government. But, to judge from the memorandum, official opinion was shaking its head dolefully even over this. "The solution reached is satisfactory in that possible attacks have been forestalled for the present. On the other hand, we may have lost an opportunity of materially strengthening our position." I do not think that any opportunity was lost. On the contrary, we had not only put a definite stop to those inroads upon the position which threatened such danger to the State of Egypt and to our policy, but this had all been achieved without proceeding to extreme measures or to open conflict. There was, therefore, very little cause for melancholy feelings, and some ground for hope in regard to the future.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SARWAT TREATY: NEGOTIATIONS ONCE MORE

THE prolonged storm which was described in the last chapter was succeeded by a lull, which enabled arrangements for King Fuad's long-projected visit to England to go forward. In order that the Chamber of Deputies should not raise objections to this visit, it was essential that he should be accompanied, as was customary on such occasions, by a Minister, and after some little discussion it was agreed that Sarwat Pasha should go with him.

The Army Budget, providing for the demands we had made, passed the Chamber without difficulty: and the other contentious measure, the Sudan subsidy, was voted intact. His Majesty, shortly followed by the Prime Minister, left for London, with the close of the Parliamentary session at the end of June.

For the moment, at any rate, the backward swing of the political pendulum appeared to have been arrested in its momentum. There was even some justification for thinking that it had commenced a contrary movement. The designs of the extremist wing had been frustrated; the Government and Zaghlul himself had in the end rejected such counsels, and adopted the moderate course of meeting our demands. That this had happened undoubtedly con-

stituted a definite step in the direction of a reasonable attitude of recognition of our just claims under the Declaration of 1922. Moreover, Sarwat Pasha, who had come out as the champion of accommodation, had undoubtedly consolidated his position, and augmented his influence in political circles. With the favourable settlement, for the time being, of the two vexed questions of British officers and the Egyptian Army, there was no doubt also that the British cause had sensibly advanced. The firmness of His Majesty's Government had had its due effect, and had begun to create a more stable impression that it was necessary to pay due attention to our views.

What was essential now was that the dust should be allowed to subside. While there was no gainsaying the fact that an advance had been made, there was also no ground for thinking that Egypt was yet ready to abandon the unreasonable position consistently advocated by extremist leaders. The position of the Moderates, though temporarily strengthened, was still precarious. If left undisturbed, they might in a period of constitutional government occupied entirely with internal betterment, succeed in consolidating their gains, and in winning a preponderating measure of electoral support. But it was perfectly clear that the time was not ripe for the opening of any burning question. The temper of the nation was still doubtful in the extreme, and to do so would only result in advancing the extremist cause and setting back moderation. What was wanted was an attitude on our part of defensive caution; ready firmly to defend our position, but otherwise waiting patiently until Egypt should be prepared to make friendly advances to us. Any sign of eagerness for accommodation on our part would now merely be

construed as weakness, and would only result in troubling the waters again. The extremists would undoubtedly try to assault our position anew, but if we remained firm and wary, each assault would be less intense than the last, until finally Egypt would weary of this futile policy, and be prepared to sit down and talk reasonably.

The arguments in favour of maintaining this attitude were strongly reinforced by the local experience of the past six months. The Deputies of the Wafd had shown—as to the rank and file—more and more clearly their natural inclination towards making mischief. As the memory of 1926 began to recede, they began to be more conscious of their parliamentary strength, and to forget the weakness of their position. This change in their attitude, as we have seen, had led to the resignation of Adly Pasha, who found their hostility and obstructiveness no longer tolerable. He chose a bad ground for resigning, but Sarwat Pasha, his successor, showed greater wisdom. He began his régime well by threatening early resignation upon ground on which he knew the country would agree with him—the intolerable interference of Deputies with the administration. The effect was instantaneous. Zaghlul rushed back from the country to resume the Presidential chair: carping criticism ceased and the Deputies came to heel. In fact it was clear that Zaghlul when he chose could always bring about an appearance of discipline and moderation among the elected representatives of the country. But whenever, from motives of personal animosity or vanity, or of political strategy, he gave the House its head, the result was an outburst of unrestrained hostility towards England and the British connexion, towards the King and his associates, and an immoderate

nationalism which was clearly the complement of xenophobia. That these occasions were not more numerous showed at least that Zaghlul himself was impressed with the futility of a struggle with the British Government, and realised that the interests of the Constitution demanded the maintenance of good relations with us. He was beginning, too, with many of the more intelligent of his followers, to appreciate the fact that Parliament was losing public esteem. It was displaying laicising tendencies obnoxious to whole classes of the population. It had done nothing for the man in the street, and had definitely displeased the fellaheen by its handling of the problem of cotton prices, while all thinking people were alarmed at the increase of nepotism and corruption, and the dislocation of provincial administration by the interference of local deputies. Out of all this it was natural that the Liberals should be gaining ground: Sarwat Pasha's stand against interference, the obvious difficulties in which he was put by the ill-judged intemperances of the Wafd, all went to extend the sympathy felt for him and his party in the country. It was clear that the process would continue and grow more rapid, provided only that nothing was done to provide the Wafd party with a slogan by which it could once more stir up national emotion.

There was no reason, on the face of it, to suppose that Sarwat Pasha's visit to England would not be of material assistance to him in this regard. Demonstrations of friendliness and goodwill would consolidate his personal position, and commit him to nothing further; while an opportunity would be provided for demonstrating to him beyond the possibility of dispute that while His Majesty's Government were unwearied in goodwill they were also

unwearying in their determination to maintain their position in Egypt unimpaired.

On July 12, the Secretary of State, after the first ceremonies of His Majesty's visit were concluded, saw Sarwat Pasha at the Foreign Office, and had a long conversation with him. I may say at once that I entertained no apprehensions at the time in regard to Sarwat Pasha's visit, for I had no ground for believing that any negotiations were contemplated, and I had had also the definite assurance of the Secretary of State that if at any time negotiations should appear to be possible, they would be conducted in Egypt and not in London. Had I been present at the meeting, I should have been still without apprehensions. I should have regarded as perhaps not entirely expedient those sentences in which Sir Austen Chamberlain urged Sarwat Pasha to consider the necessity for some permanent agreement between England and Egypt, for, as I have shown, I was convinced that the first move must come from Egypt, and that it was tactically wrong for us to evince any active desire to negotiate. But apart from this I should have applauded with all my heart the force and lucidity with which Sir Austen set out the disinterested sincerity of our position, and our determination to maintain it: I should have gratefully acknowledged the generosity of the support he accorded to me: and I should have been reassured finally by these two sentences: "I did not suggest "that we should carry on any negotiations during his "visit in London, but might we not perhaps prepare "the way for conversations between himself and Lord "Lloyd when they had both returned to Egypt." . . . "I repeated that I had no idea of entering into a "negotiation with him during this visit, but it might

"be useful if before Lord Lloyd left, I could give him "rather more precise indications on the lines on which "we might proceed than were contained in what I had "just said to His Excellency."

The confidence that I should undoubtedly have felt would have been rudely dispelled had I known that the very next day permanent officials of the Foreign Office began negotiations with Sarwat Pasha, suggesting there and then that a treaty of alliance should be concluded. Discussion also took place with regard to the principles of such a treaty.

In spite of the Secretary of State's clearly recorded intention not to negotiate with Sarwat Pasha "during "this visit", the historical fact is that negotiations were begun the very next day, and two days afterwards—July 15—a detailed treaty was actually in draft. On July 18 Sarwat Pasha called again at the Foreign Office and communicated a draft treaty which he on his side had drawn up. The private secretary discussed this draft with him, and finally told him that he "would at once take steps to communicate his "draft to the Secretary of State".

It thus happened that the Secretary of State, who on July 12 had been reiterating his firm intention that no negotiations should take place in London at this time, on July 18 was presented by his advisers with a draft treaty drawn up after considerable negotiation between them and the Egyptian Prime Minister. No record is available of the Secretary of State's immediate reactions to this rapid development. On July 24, however, he circulated to the Egyptian Committee of the Cabinet the sketch of a draft Treaty of Alliance produced by Sarwat Pasha, and an alternative draft prepared in the Foreign Office. He stated that owing to the pressure of

other affairs he had been unable as yet to discuss these drafts in detail with me, but hoped to be in a position to ask the Cabinet for a decision very shortly. Meanwhile I had never seen the drafts, was unaware of their existence, and had not been informed by the Secretary of State that anything was taking place.

Had I been consulted—and as I was in London, consultation with me was not difficult—I should have urged—and events would have proved me right—that in the present temper of Egypt there was absolutely no hope of any treaty which maintained the interests that we considered vital being accepted by that country. That this was not purely a personal view is shown by the memorandum which my deputy, Mr. Neville Henderson, submitted upon the draft treaty in August, which begins as follows: “On the “supposition that negotiations for a treaty are desirable and inevitable, what prospect is there that, once “undertaken, they will result in an agreement acceptable to both parties? Is it, in the first place, possible “to devise terms which, without imperilling British “imperial and commercial interests, will be sufficiently “attractive from an Egyptian point of view to ensure “ratification of the treaty by an Egyptian parliament? “And secondly, even if this were possible according “to the ordinary standards of logic and mutual advantage, will the Egyptians in general, and Saad in “particular, have the moral courage to face facts, and “to recognise that it is better to achieve something “than to keep a national programme inviolate by “achieving nothing.” Those were the questions which it was vital to answer before negotiations began—questions which were apparently passed over in silence at the time—questions which were in fact ultimately answered with a flat negative. The sad



truth was that to enmesh Sarwat Pasha at this juncture in the net of treaty negotiation was to render his political downfall inevitable. Any Egyptian statesman who sponsored Treaty proposals falling short of complete independence for Egypt was certain to be torn limb from limb. It might have been bluntly replied that that was Sarwat's business, and that it was up to him to look after his own career; but the reply had no real force, for Sarwat Pasha, like many of his countrymen, was not naturally inclined to take a long view, and he was now presented with an opportunity which appeared, however delusively, to offer the possibility of immediate advantage, in circumstances which made it very difficult to decline.

On July 28 it appears that the Cabinet approved the draft of the proposed treaty which had been drawn up by the Foreign Office. On August 2 the Secretary of State telegraphed to Mr. Henderson in Egypt a resumé of the communication he was making to the French and Italian Governments on the subject of his conversations with Sarwat Pasha; the resumé made no mention of draft, or counter-draft, or Cabinet approval, but merely suggested that by conversation a frame of mind must have been induced in Sarwat Pasha in which a fruitful seed might ultimately germinate. As a matter of fact the seed had not only germinated, but had already grown into a fine tree, on whose branches preambles and clauses had already sprouted. Sarwat Pasha left for Egypt at the end of August. At the Embassy in Paris he had another conversation with the private secretary, who reported that Sarwat Pasha handed to him the observations "which he had promised me in London "on the subject of the draft treaty", expressed his intention to return to London in October "for the

“purpose of continuing the discourses which had been “begun with him”, and said that the document he was communicating was not to be regarded in any way as “a final statement of his position”.

In the meanwhile the situation in Egypt itself was to be profoundly altered by an event which Egyptians had almost come to regard as impossible. At ten o'clock on the night of August 23 Saad Zaghlul Pasha breathed his last. Although he had been ill for some days, the seriousness of his condition had been carefully concealed, and the news of his death took Egypt by surprise. He was given a State funeral with full military honours, and two thousand people escorted his body to the grave. There was no deep display of emotion: the suddenness of the news appeared to have taken Egypt's breath away, and most people were busy speculating upon the uncertainty of a future without Zaghlul, which they were now for the first time forced to contemplate. That future was uncertain indeed: the domination which he had established over large classes of his fellow-countrymen, and most completely over their political representatives, could not be handed on to any of his followers. Of late the advantages of this concentration of power had been more conspicuous than its disadvantages. Now one of the three centres of influence in Egypt had disappeared, and it was impossible to foretell what the reactions might be.

One thing at least seemed clear—Zaghlul had been the one person whose support of a treaty with England could have ensured its acceptance. With his death, the possibility of such acceptance was rendered infinitely more remote, and it became more than ever necessary to proceed with caution. In so uncertain a situation, it was essential to suspend

action until there was some indication as to how the internal situation would develop. The Liberals had a better chance of securing the lead now that Zaghlul, the only Wafd leader who could countervail their superior intelligence, was removed. Equally, the Wafd would be more than ever anxious to assert themselves by emotional appeals. Curiously enough, these considerations were used in London as an argument in favour of pressing forward the treaty negotiations, although it was realised that the prospect of securing a treaty was now remote. It was now decided to entice Sarwat Pasha finally to his doom, on the odd theory that further negotiations would make it easier for him "to form a pro-treaty party of reasonable persons which could out-influence and perhaps in time out-vote the extremists". I do not know what justification was discovered in the existing situation for so wild a surmise. The one thing that was certain to destroy the influence of reasonable opinion was to throw into the present situation the torch of agreement with England, with its inevitable result of inflaming emotional unreason. None the less negotiations were pressed on: the Foreign Office went on preparing "notes", "explanatory memoranda", "memoranda on general considerations", "reports of conversations". Everything possible was done to add fuel to the fire; and rumours were already circulating busily in Egypt, arousing all sorts of hopes and fears. As long as Sarwat Pasha could keep negotiations alive, he could make political capital out of it all. He could always be hinting at what he was going to get, and no political party in Egypt would dare to try and upset him. But the moment he was compelled to come out in the open and divulge the result of his negotiations, his doom was sealed.

He returned to London at the end of October to resume negotiations with the Secretary of State. On October 22 Mr. Neville Henderson wrote from Alexandria a despatch which contained a final warning full of wisdom. He pointed out that there was no stability in the present internal situation in Egypt, and that its developments were impossible to foresee: that in consequence there could be no guarantee that Sarwat Pasha would get any treaty accepted, however far it went, and that in any event he would have to make known sooner or later the terms of the drafts. "It seems to me, in fact, that Sarwat's discussions in London last July have forced us into a position in which we must frankly and very precisely state what we are prepared to give way upon, and what we insist must be maintained. Egypt has the right to be made aware of what we regard as indispensable to the safety of our Empire."

It was a very similar view that I took myself when the fact that negotiations were well under way was at last disclosed to me on Sarwat Pasha's return at the end of October. I thought the initiation of these negotiations to have been not only impolitic, and useless, but actually full of harmful possibilities to our own interests, and to those of our Egyptian supporters. But to negotiation we were now irretrievably committed: breaking off at this stage would result in the most harm of all, besides involving a breach of faith. The only course open to me was now to do my utmost to turn the present proposals to the advantage of England and Egypt. I could, however, entertain little hope that a treaty would be secured, and it was a poor consolation to reflect that failure of this wild goose chase, when it came about, would perhaps convince the Secretary

of State that my advisers had not been entirely at fault in their diagnosis of the Egyptian situation.

For the moment, however, there was nothing for it but to concentrate upon the endeavour to secure a reasonable treaty.

However doubtful of success this course might be, we were committed to it, and must pursue it now to the end. Upon one thing I was determined: there should be no room left for doubt in any responsible mind in England as to my own views and proposals. The drafts of the treaty were not shown to me until twenty-four hours before I was called upon to give a responsible opinion. I was in London away from my papers and my advisers, but I had the situation pretty thoroughly in my head, and felt that I had enough material upon which to outline the limit to which concession was possible. In the short time at my disposal I endeavoured to make it clear to the Secretary of State that I thought that in regard to certain of the proposals made by the Foreign Office we were going beyond the minimum which was absolutely vital to our own imperial and commercial interests. Having made this divergence clear, I was extremely embarrassed at receiving a summons to the Cabinet. I at once informed the Secretary of State and placed myself unreservedly in his hands. He was my chief, and I held views which differed from his: if I went to the Cabinet I must express those views fully, even in opposition to my own chief. I asked him what he would have me do. His reply relieved me of a great anxiety, for he told me with unhesitating friendliness that I must of course tell the Cabinet what my views were, and that he himself would expect this, and welcome it. Immediately after that

meeting of the Cabinet had taken place I was due to return to Egypt, and Sarwat Pasha, as it happened, was leaving by the same boat as myself. Nothing had finally been decided in regard to the treaty, and I left London with the clear impression that there was no chance of any decision being taken until I was back in Cairo and in communication with His Majesty's Government again. I travelled therefore to Paris, and then to Marseilles: but had hardly embarked before I was overtaken by the Consul-General with an urgent telegram, which informed me that the Cabinet had decided to approve the draft treaty, that the concurrence of the Dominions was being immediately sought, and that I was to arrange for exchange of signatures immediately upon my arrival in Cairo. Sarwat Pasha had shaken off the dust of London on November 8, but had been followed to Paris, where he had been brought to further urgent discussions on the night of the 9th (to which although I was in Paris I was made no party) and on the morning of the 10th. As a result of these discussions, the Foreign Office representative felt himself able to report a virtual though not a complete agreement. He said that before leaving he had impressed upon Sarwat Pasha that "if we succeeded "in agreeing with him on all points, it was vital he "should make no attempt to reopen the discussion. . . . "He must make it clear to those in Egypt with "whom he would discuss the matter that the arrange- "ment on which he had agreed must be taken as it "stood or left." Sarwat Pasha said he would "oppose "any idea of reopening the question by telegraph".

It was the height of cruelty to extract such an engagement from the Pasha, who was now within measurable distance of his Waterloo, and could

hardly be expected to tie his own hands at a moment when he was about to fight for his life. But if others were blind to that fact, the Prime Minister of Egypt was not. He knew, none better, what were the prospects of the Foreign Office treaty being accepted by Egypt. His only hope was to press at every point for further negotiation and further concession. He had extracted a great deal already by way of concession, but not enough to save himself. Only a miracle could secure his final salvation; in its absence he could but work to defer as long as possible the fatal day of his defeat. On November 14 the following message from the Secretary of State was received in Cairo: "Please greet Sarwat Pasha cordially from me on his arrival. Tell him that I am happy to be able to greet him on his return with the news that, subject to the concurrence of the Dominion Governments, His Majesty's Government approve the result of our common work, and will be prepared to sign treaty as soon as he is in position to do so. You will express to Sarwat Pasha my high regard for the courage, statesmanship, and frankness which he showed throughout our conversations, and my confidence that the same qualities will enable him to bring our joint labours to a successful issue. The High Commissioner and I will do all in our power to smooth his path, and I count on him to help us in avoiding or removing difficulties." Poor Sarwat Pasha! The real test of his "courage, statesmanship, and frankness" was still to come. And the satisfaction which the Secretary of State was able to draw from the prospect of signature was for him no satisfaction at all, but a nightmare of anticipation. From now onwards, the high hopes entertained in Whitehall were to be steadily dissipated, and that satisfaction replaced by

disappointed resentment, as Sarwat Pasha, animated by the instinct of self-preservation, struggled with all his might to avoid facing the issue, and to extricate himself from the bonds in which the Foreign Office had tied him.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE SARWAT TREATY: FAILURE ONCE MORE

ON November 24 the Secretary of State sent me the following despatch:

FOREIGN OFFICE, *Nov. 24, 1927.*

MY LORD,

When Sarwat Pasha and your Lordship left London to return to Egypt, the discussions between His Excellency and myself were practically completed, but time had not permitted me to obtain the final decision of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain on the draft treaty in the form which had been given to it as the result of our long and friendly exchange of views.

2. I was, however, able to inform you just before you left Marseilles in the same ship in which his Excellency travelled that, subject only to the settlement of a suitable text for the expression of the agreement on a minor point which Sarwat Pasha and I had already reached in principle and to the concurrence of His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions and India (which, as I had already explained to his Excellency, we considered necessary), His Majesty's Government in Great Britain were prepared to accept the Treaty as then proposed. It was understood between us that on each side ratification would be subject to parliamentary approval.

3. I need not say that the treaty thus definitely approved differs in many and important respects from the draft which I had earlier offered to Sarwat Pasha on behalf of His Majesty's Government. It embodies large concessions to his Excellency's own views and to Egyptian sentiment, which, after hearing Sarwat Pasha's explanations, His Majesty's Government have

felt it possible to make in order to reach agreement. His Excellency was good enough to recognise fully on more than one occasion the friendly and sympathetic spirit in which His Majesty's Government has received and considered his representations, and I gladly acknowledge that his Excellency brought a similar friendly spirit, largeness of outlook and earnest desire for agreement to our common deliberations.

4. In its present form the draft treaty must be regarded as expressing on the one side and the other the limit to which each party can advance in his wish to meet the other. It was so understood between us, and it was on this condition only that Sarwat Pasha no less than I could go thus far. It was common ground to us both that no further changes could be made and that the treaty must now be accepted or rejected as it stands.

5. His Excellency will remember that I found great difficulty in giving even a provisional and personal assent to the existing wording of one passage near the beginning of article 7. I refer to the phrase "pending the conclusion at some future date of an agreement by which, etc." I was concerned lest this wording should give rise at some future time to a suggestion that it necessarily implied that at some time, however distant, His Majesty's Government would make such an agreement. I told his Excellency that I had no wish to bar the conclusion of such an agreement should it ever become possible, but that I was unwilling in a document of such importance to both countries to admit any ambiguity, and that His Majesty's Government could come under no engagement, expressed or implied, to withdraw His Majesty's forces from Egypt and to entrust to the Egyptian Government alone the protection of the lines of communication of the British Empire where they pass through or over Egyptian territory. His Excellency was, however, able to assure me that this was not the intention or meaning of the wording which he had proposed to me. He said that it was his hope that if this treaty were ratified a time would come when His Majesty's Government would feel that it was as safe to leave the defence of Egypt and the protection of British interests in that country to the Government of Egypt as they now felt it safe to leave the protection of similar interests in the Dominions to the Governments of those Dominions. He was

well aware that that time was in any case a long way off, and he was content to leave to the absolute discretion of His Majesty's Government the decision as to its possibility. All he asked was that His Majesty's Government should not absolutely bar the possibility of realising an Egyptian aspiration if at some future time His Majesty's Government themselves should become convinced that by the course of Anglo-Egyptian relations the step could then be safely taken.

6. It was on this assurance that I agreed to recommend Sarwat Pasha's proposals to the British Government. I am bound to say that I found my colleagues at first shared my doubts, and for the very reason which I had expressed to his Excellency, namely, their reluctance to use any words which at some future time and by persons unacquainted with what had passed between His Excellency and me might be thought to imply an obligation on His Majesty's Government sooner or later to conclude an agreement of this character. I therefore repeated to His Majesty's Government the explanation which Sarwat Pasha had volunteered to me, and on this understanding and in pursuance of his Excellency's assurance His Majesty's Government have accepted his text.

7. There were other points in the draft which formed the subject of long and anxious consideration by Sarwat Pasha and myself and which went so clearly beyond my instructions that I was obliged to reserve them specifically for decision by the Cabinet. His Excellency will observe that the objections which I raised have not been sustained by His Majesty's Government, who have thus shown their earnest desire to make the treaty such as Sarwat Pasha could recommend confidently and without reserve to the Egyptian Government and nation.

8. His Excellency may wish me to repeat the assurance which I offered him and which he in turn gave to me, that the words "existing", "present", "already established" and their like in the annex refer to the conditions actually in force at the time when we discussed the draft. They preclude a change in these conditions on either side between that time and the date of ratification of the treaty.

9. I have now the pleasure to inform your Lordship that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain, after communications

with His Majesty's Governments in the Dominions and India, accept the draft agreed upon between us of which a copy is attached to this despatch, and that you are authorised to sign the treaty on behalf of His Majesty as soon as His Excellency is in a position to sign for the Egyptian Government. It is our earnest hope that by this treaty, equally honourable to both peoples, ensuring to Egypt her freedom and independence and her due place among the nations of the world, and to the British Empire protection for her vital interests and international obligations, we may have laid the secure foundation of future amity and concord between Egypt and the British Empire.

10. I request that you will read this despatch to Sarwat Pasha and leave a copy of it with His Excellency.

I am, etc.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

*P.S.*—The text of the treaty which I enclose is in English. As agreed by Sarwat Pasha and myself it is this text which should be signed and which alone is authoritative; but for your convenience in discussing the matter with him I also forward you a French translation.

Sir Austen Chamberlain, with no intimate knowledge of Egyptian politics to guide him, was assuming that all that was left to do was the affixing of signatures. Sarwat Pasha had never harboured any such illusion, and knew very well that for him and the treaty the real dangers still lay ahead.

Before proceeding to describe the incidents which led to the final breakdown of the treaty negotiations, and the consequent annihilation of Sarwat Pasha in favour of Nahas and the Wafd—which in its turn was to be followed soon after by the suspension of the Constitution—it is necessary, I think, to summarise some general conclusions which are of extreme importance in this context. This was the third attempt to negotiate a treaty with Egypt which had

taken place since 1920, and since the recommendations of the Milner Commission. The Commission had, it will be remembered, first suggested the idea of a treaty of alliance, and had set out the lines on which such a treaty should run. They were the following:

(I.) In return for Great Britain's undertaking to defend the independence of Egypt, Egypt would agree to be guided by England in her foreign relations.

(II.) Egypt would confer upon Great Britain certain defined rights upon Egyptian Territory: (*a*) to maintain a military force there, (*b*) to control to a limited extent legislation and administration affecting foreigners.

The Mission had itself endeavoured to explore the possibilities of negotiation on these lines, and had described the results as follows: "The idea of a treaty . . . was readily accepted, but when it came to discussing those terms of the treaty which embodied the few but essential safeguards for British and foreign interests, the Egyptians were always extremely apprehensive of agreeing to something which might conflict with their ideal of independence. As a matter of fact, our proposals did not conflict with that ideal—reasonably interpreted—as the Egyptians themselves, or at any rate some of them, were ready to admit. But there was always the fear in their minds that their countrymen would not take the same view, and that they would be regarded as having betrayed the national cause." The conclusion which they reached, therefore, was that while the negotiation of such a treaty should be ultimately possible, there was still opposition and rancorous hostility in Egypt, and until that had disappeared successful negotiation was not possible. In fact, what was re-

quired was to wait patiently until reasoned moderation had gained in the mind of Egypt the upper hand over unreasoned extremism. Until that happened, reasonable Egyptian opinion would not dare to express its real views in public; and to persuade or manœuvre any moderate leader into doing so would be merely to sign his political death-warrant.

In 1921 no experienced observer on the spot would have reported that any real change of heart was visible in Egypt; nevertheless, negotiations were begun with Adly Pasha—a moderate—who of course secured as much concession as he could, and then inevitably rejected the terms offered. There followed the natural reaction on the part of the authorities at home, whose resentment at the rejection of their offer expressed itself in a strongly worded warning to Egypt that the last word had been said, that fanaticism and disruptive tactics would no longer be countenanced, and that we were determined to maintain our essential position in Egypt. Very shortly, however, these high-sounding asseverations were again departed from, and an attempt was again made by the Declaration of 1922 to secure the support of Moderate opinion. Again there was no sign of any real change of heart in Egypt, and again the right policy would have been to wait patiently until such a change became clearly visible. But instead, the original mistake was repeated, and the 1924 negotiations were opened with Zaghlul himself, who was utterly unyielding and intransigent. The next incident was the murder of the Sirdar. Once again there was the violent resentment and the stern ultimatum, and it might have been expected that this time at least Great Britain would have learnt her lesson, would have refused again to eat her words, and would

have settled down to a policy of watchful waiting until the waters should have ceased to be troubled. Equally in 1927 no experienced person in Egypt could have felt that there was any prospect of securing a reasonable treaty, although some would have allowed themselves to hope that matters had begun to improve, and that moderation was getting a little better chance. But surprisingly the lesson had still not been learnt: the same heedless optimism reopened negotiations, the same deep resentment emerged upon their failure, the same unnecessary and deadly blow was dealt to the chances of moderation in Egypt.

Along with all this had gone a steady but very considerable recession from the position which we had taken up in 1922. The points which were definitely reserved in that Declaration began almost immediately to be whittled down in the series of unsuccessful attempts which we had been making to secure a treaty which was in fact impossible to secure. All the time that negotiations were proceeding, the extremist element was in fact completely dominating the internal situation in Egypt. All the time they had maintained a perfectly definite attitude—they had refused to accept the Declaration of 1922, to countenance the reservations contained in it, or to discuss anything short of complete independence. All the time, however much we might justify our concessions as being made in the hope of strengthening Liberal opinion, that had been simply self-deception, and we were steadily surrendering to the Wafd and coming round to their point of view. Although we regarded that point of view as fanatically unreasonable, and grossly detrimental to the true interests of Egypt, we were all the time encouraging it by our actions. In each case it was we who evinced the first eagerness to negotiate:

in each case it was we who made concessions: in each case it was we who gave the impressions of being unstable and uncertain of ourselves—had friends, and negligible enemies.

It will be remembered that in November 1927 the Secretary of State was confidently expecting immediate signature of a Treaty. Instead there supervened prolonged further negotiations, the course of which is officially described in a despatch sent to me by the Secretary of State on February 5, 1928, quoted below. At this date the negotiations were still proceeding, and it had not been possible to bring Sarwat Pasha to the point where he would come out into the open and commit himself. I had been having frequent discussions with him, in regard to the numerous explanations and interpretations which he was constantly demanding. At all these discussions I had been careful to have Mr. Nevile Henderson present with me, not only because of his valuable advice but also in order that no room should be left in Sarwat Pasha's mind for any misunderstanding which might afterwards bear fruit. The Secretary of State's despatch was worded as follows:

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 5th, 1928.*

MY LORD,

I think it may be useful at the present juncture to set down as succinctly as is compatible with accuracy the general course taken by the negotiations between His Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Prime Minister respecting a Treaty of Alliance, from the date of the receipt of my despatches Nos. 1061 and 1064 of 24th November last.

2. The former despatch contained the text of a draft treaty upon which Sarwat Pasha and I had agreed, and to which the Dominion Governments had given their assent, while the latter contained the text of a draft note respecting capitulatory reform which, it was proposed, should be addressed to the



Egyptian Government on the occasion of the ratification of the main treaty. Your lordship communicated the first-named despatch to Sarwat Pasha on the evening of the 3rd December and handed him a copy. His Excellency then expressed himself optimistically as to the treaty's prospects.

3. Some days later, a parliamentary question was put down in which I was asked when I proposed to make a statement regarding the results of my conversations with Sarwat Pasha. I requested you to inform Sarwat Pasha that I appreciated his wish to ascertain as definitely as possible the degree of support on which he could count, but to point out, on the other hand, that it was difficult to ascertain with any certainty the attitude of individuals or parties towards it without the fact of the existence of the treaty leaking out and more or less incorrect versions of it becoming public. This, in my view, would be neither dignified nor calculated to enhance the prospect of the treaty's acceptance. So far as His Majesty's Government were concerned, it would be convenient if the treaty were signed in the course of the following week and published simultaneously here and in Egypt on about the 20th December. I asked you to ascertain Sarwat Pasha's views upon this proposal.

4. On your communicating with Sarwat Pasha in the above sense, his Excellency showed some surprise that so immediate action on his part should be suggested. He began by saying that his intention was to divulge the contents of the treaty and supplementary notes to his Cabinet colleagues, and to the President of the Wafd, separately, as soon as they had been translated into Arabic. On being asked whether, in the event of the opinions thus elicited being favourable, he would be in a position to sign the treaty shortly, he qualified his previous statement by saying that he felt unable to lay the documents before his colleagues before he had discussed with you certain important issues which had not been cleared up in London. The issues in question were as follows:—

(1) A more precise understanding as to the future of British officers in the Egyptian army after the coming into force of the treaty.

(2) Points connected with the allocation of the waters of the Nile.

(3) Points connected with the reform in the capitulatory system referred to in article 9 of the treaty and the draft note on the subject attached to it. I would observe in this connection that I do not propose, in the course of the present despatch, to deal in any detail with the discussions upon the subsidiary questions of capitulatory reform and the allocation of the Nile waters, but to confine myself to negotiations regarding the treaty itself.

5. In reporting Sarwat Pasha's attitude, you observed that his difficulties were very real and that undue haste on our part might not only drive him to take a false step, for which the blame might fall upon His Majesty's Government, but might also be interpreted as excessive anxiety to secure a treaty in our own interests. With this estimate I was in agreement.

6. On receiving your account of the conversation with Sarwat Pasha just referred to, I asked you to point out to him that, while I did not wish to press immediate signature and publication upon him unduly, I begged him, for his part, to realise the importance, from more than one point of view, of avoiding unnecessary delay, and to add that I should be grateful for a full and frank statement of his views as to the course which he considered events should take and as to the dates on which he thought it likely that he would be in a position to sign and to publish the treaty.

7. On the 14th December you had an interview with Sarwat Pasha, at which his Excellency, after discussing questions arising from the draft note respecting the Capitulations, adverted to Annex II (c)<sup>1</sup> of the draft treaty, which deals with the presence of European officials in the Egyptian Government police force. His Excellency argued that when agreement had been reached regarding capitulatory reform the Egyptian Government would be free, under the clause in question, to dispense with all foreign officials in the police and public security departments other than those required by the Procureur General, the total number of which latter he defined as seven, to cover Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said.

8. Two days after the conversation just described, Sarwat Pasha again visited you with a view to bringing it to a con-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 264.

clusion. His Excellency did not, however, confine himself to the three subjects he had originally raised (see paragraph 4 above), but, taking the treaty clause by clause, sought your concurrence in interpretations he put forward of their meanings. You rightly felt considerable doubt as to the propriety of this procedure in a case where an agreed text had already been decided upon, and refrained from expressing any opinion on the points raised by Sarwat Pasha, merely taking careful note of them for reference to His Majesty's Government. The issues thus raised by Sarwat Pasha included article 2, article 4, article 6 and article 8 of the treaty, as well as Annex I (a).<sup>1</sup>

9. You took advantage of this discussion to convey to Sarwat Pasha my views respecting the treaty's signature and publication (see paragraph 6 above). His Excellency, in reply, stated that he contemplated communicating the text of the treaty to his colleagues and to the leader of the Wafd during the first week of January. In agreement with the King, he proposed this date in view of the approaching visit of the King of Afghanistan. Some delay, his Excellency urged, was in any case inevitable in order that he might learn the views of His Majesty's Government on the various interpretations which he had just put forward. These, he said, represented the conclusion of his general observations on the treaty, and he awaited the answer of His Majesty's Government. With regard to signature and publication he anticipated that about a week must elapse after communication of the text to his colleagues before he could induce them to sign or recognise his inability to do so. In the meantime, he repeated, he had not shewn the text to his colleagues or to anyone else.

10. After careful consideration of the various points raised by Sarwat Pasha, and of your observations on them, I requested you to convey to his Excellency in the following terms :—

“Lord Lloyd had communicated to me your Excellency's comments and enquiries in connection with the treaty and the subsidiary note on capitulatory reform.

“Your Excellency will recollect that in the memorandum commenting on the first British counter-draft of the treaty, handed to Mr. Selby in Paris in August last, strong emphasis

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 260-263.

“was laid on the importance of Great Britain relying less upon a “cut and dried scheme of safeguards than upon the sentiment “of mutual confidence which the alliance would generate. This “argument carried considerable weight with me and, as your “Excellency will admit, is reflected in the final text of the treaty. “But now to suggest that His Majesty’s Government should “define in advance what would be their interpretation, in hypo- “thetical circumstances, of particular provisions of the treaty, “seems to me to be in conflict with the principle which your “Excellency yourself invoked. If Great Britain should trust “Egypt, Egypt should equally trust Great Britain.

“Moreover, unilateral interpretations of the text by either “party manifestly do not bind the other party in advance. The “possibility of an occasional divergence of views is common to all “international engagements of a similar nature and cannot be “entirely excluded by our treaty, but the treaty itself provides “the remedy by article 14,<sup>1</sup> which directs that such divergencies “of interpretation shall be referred to the Council of the League. “I would like to remind your Excellency that at the time when “the Locarno treaties were signed apprehensions were very “generally expressed that the difficult and thorny questions “with which they dealt would involve such constant reference “to the League for interpretative rulings as to defeat the whole “object of the treaties. These apprehensions have not been “justified, and though two years have elapsed since the treaties “were signed, the better understanding and more friendly and “confident relations which they have created amongst the “Powers concerned have made any appeal to the League un- “necessary. We are surely entitled to hope that the conclusion “of our treaty will produce similar consequences.

“I can fully appreciate, however, your Excellency’s natural “wish to be in a position to explain as far as possible to your “colleagues the scope and meaning of the treaty and subsidiary “agreements. I have given Lord Lloyd an indication in general “terms of the impressions produced upon me by your Excel- “lency’s comments and enquiries, and I have authorised him to “convey them to your Excellency, subject always to the con- “siderations to which I have alluded above.”

<sup>1</sup> See p. 262.

11. At the same time I communicated to you my views on the various issues raised by Sarwat Pasha, rather, as I pointed out, for your own information than for Sarwat Pasha's, and I requested you to avoid giving anything more than general and verbal explanation with regard to the meaning which I considered could be attached to the various articles of the treaty. The position in regard to the subsidiary notes on capitulatory reform and irrigation was, I observed, rather different, since these documents were of a less final nature than the treaty, and I authorised you to deal with them in somewhat greater length and detail.

12. On the 31st December you reported that you had had lengthy conversations with Sarwat Pasha, and that his Excellency now represented that it would be impossible for him to persuade his colleagues in the Cabinet or Parliament to accept the draft treaty until he received in writing certain assurances regarding the interpretation of the text. In addition to points respecting reform of the Capitulations, the assurances for which his Excellency asked were in substance the following:—

Article 2.—That it was not the intention of the treaty to restrict the freedom hitherto enjoyed by Egypt to negotiate commercial treaties.

Article 4.—That under the treaty His Majesty's Government radically limit their claim to intervene on behalf of foreign interests and do not dispute the right of foreign representatives to make appropriate representations to the Egyptian Government when the interests of their nationals are menaced. His Majesty's Government merely reserve the right to intervene when the gravity of any case is such as to create a risk of military intervention.

Article 6.—That His Majesty's Government have no wish to insist on the declaration of Egyptian martial law, provided that the help and facilities promised to Great Britain under the treaty are forthcoming without it.

Article 8.—That His Majesty's Government, not having opposed in the past the engagement of foreign experts when suitable Englishmen were not available, do not propose to modify this policy or to press for an unreasonably narrow interpretation of the treaty in this respect.

Article 11 (c).—That His Majesty's Government agree that this article does not impose any obligation upon Egypt after the coming into force of a reform of the capitulatory system.

13. Sarwat Pasha further raised two new points. He argued that Annex I (a) should be regarded as applying only to those two officers who were dealt with in the notes exchanged last summer (*i.e.* the Inspector-General and his deputy) and not to the remaining British officers in the Egyptian army. With regard to Annex II (c) Sarwat contended that the real intention of this clause could not be to bind Egypt permanently to retain the existing British police officials if the proposed conference regarding capitulatory reform broke down. These two points, as you observed, could not be classified as mere interpretations of the text, which could not bear the meaning suggested by Sarwat Pasha, but as modifications of its sense. In transmitting Sarwat Pasha's remarks to me you pointed out that to refuse his Excellency's requests for written interpretations appeared to involve an immediate breakdown in the negotiations, and, although you were most reluctant in principle to embark upon any interpretations in writing of the agreed text, in the circumstances you were of opinion that an effort should be made to meet the Prime Minister so far as this was practicable. To accept his interpretation of Annex I (a) was, you held, on the merits of the question impolitic and on the wording of the treaty impossible. Any satisfaction, therefore, to be given to Sarwat Pasha in connection with this annex would have to be secured by some means other than by placing on the actual wording an interpretation which it obviously could not bear. I shared your views in this respect and authorised you to inform Sarwat Pasha that on the occasion of the treaty's ratification His Majesty's Government would be prepared to give him certain assurances in writing.

14. Generally speaking, I was of opinion that the assurances in question would not be found to depart widely, if at all, from those which would be given were the question referred to the Council of the League of Nations for settlement under the provisions of the treaty itself. The message which I requested you to convey to the Prime Minister was as follows:—

“Your Excellency has felt it necessary to enquire the mean-

“ing which His Britannic Majesty’s Government attach to certain provisions of the treaty which we have just signed. As your Excellency is aware, the possibility of an occasional divergence of view is common to all international engagements such as that we have just signed, but the treaty itself provides the remedy by article 14 which directs that such divergencies of interpretation shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations.

“Subject to these considerations, I am authorised by His Majesty’s Government to inform your Excellency that in their view article 2 was not intended to restrict the freedom hitherto enjoyed by Egypt to negotiate commercial treaties.

“As regards article 4, the obligation which it imposes on His Majesty the King of Egypt to consult with His Britannic Majesty in certain eventualities does not exclude and is not intended to exclude the right of foreign representatives to make appropriate representations to the Egyptian Government when the interests of their States or subjects are menaced.

“In such cases, His Britannic Majesty’s Government merely reserve to themselves the right to intervene when direct negotiations between the parties have failed to provide a solution and the circumstances of any particular case are of such gravity as to imperil the good relations between His Majesty the King of Egypt and the Power whose interests are concerned. Your Excellency will no doubt realise that the general effect of the treaty taken as a whole is that the right of His Britannic Majesty’s Government to intervene on behalf of foreign interests is greatly restricted, and this was clearly understood and intended by His Britannic Majesty’s Government.

“His Majesty’s Government have no wish to insist upon the introduction of Egyptian martial law provided that the help and facilities promised to Great Britain in the circumstances contemplated by the treaty are forthcoming without it.

“His Majesty’s Government have not opposed in the past the engagements of foreign experts when suitable British candidates were not available, and they do not propose to modify this policy or to press for an unreasonably narrow interpretation of article 8 in this respect.

“His Majesty’s Government agree with your Excellency’s view that Annex II (c) does not impose any obligation on Egypt

"after the coming into force of the reform of the capitulatory system in the manner therein prescribed."

15. With regard to Annex I (a), I informed your Lordship that I regarded Sarwat's suggested interpretation as obviously untenable, but I observed that the opening words of this clause, namely, "In default of previous agreement between 'the high contracting parties'", were designed specifically to permit of a modification of the *status quo*, for example, by the conversion of the existing British personnel into a military mission being effected as soon as the treaty had come into force. I remarked that Sarwat Pasha was perfectly at liberty to make suggestions on these lines, which, *prima facie*, appeared unobjectionable. This, I considered, might enable his Excellency to satisfy his colleagues on this particular point.

16. With regard to Annex II (c), I indicated to you that I was not altogether satisfied that the continued existence of the European Department, at least in its present form, after the coming into force of the treaty, would really be in consonance with the régime which would then be established, but I pointed out that if the Egyptian Government wished to secure its desiderata as regards capitulatory reform, they would be well advised to satisfy the Powers that the Procurator-General would be able to count on an adequate number of Europeans in the city police forces, and on some suitable liaison with the Public Security Department. In all the circumstances, I authorised you to give Sarwat Pasha the assurance that, in the event of a breakdown in the Capitulations Conference, His Majesty's Government would not regard the continuance of the European Department and of the retention of the foreign members of the police force in their present functions and numbers as a *chose jugée*; but that, whilst reserving their rights under Annex II (c), His Majesty's Government would be ready, if asked to do so by the Egyptian Government, to examine the question afresh and on its merits at that time. I requested your Lordship, in giving this assurance, to mention to the Prime Minister that the British Delegation would raise this question at the Capitulations Conference if the Egyptian representatives did not themselves do so.

17. Little progress was made in the course of interviews



between your Lordship and the Prime Minister on the 10th and 11th January. Sarwat Pasha explained that he had not yet had time to study the text of the draft assurances described above, and with regard to Annex I (a) and Annex II (c), he maintained that our offers were useless to him from the point of view of Egyptian public opinion. Until these points had been cleared up it was impossible for him to discuss the treaty with his colleagues. On the 18th January, however, his Excellency made it clear that subject to one unobjectionable modification in the draft assurance your Excellency had offered him upon article 4, the only points remaining outstanding were Annexes I (a) and II (c).

18. In the light of the situation thus produced, your Lordship proposed that the conversion of the British personnel in the Egyptian army into a military mission might be considered provided the adoption of this procedure was not allowed to delay the laying of the treaty before Egyptian Cabinet with a view to its signature by Sarwat Pasha. With regard to Annex II (c), however, you felt unable to recommend any advance upon the offer we had already made. You took up this attitude on the grounds you had stated earlier in correspondence, viz., that by placing any time limit on retention of British police officers the finding of substitutes for those who might resign would be rendered very difficult while a question affecting protection of life and property of vital importance to other foreign communities in Egypt as well as to our own would thus be prejudiced before Capitulations Conference even met. The situation was considered by His Majesty's Government on the 1st February, and your Lordship was authorised to endeavour to work out with Sarwat a text of notes which would provide for the establishment of a military mission. Our differences with Sarwat Pasha being thus, as it appeared probable, reduced to a single issue,—namely, Annex II (c)—His Majesty's Government further authorised your Lordship to offer Sarwat the following alternative formula respecting that clause:—

“In default of the conclusion within five years of the coming into force of the treaty of agreements with the Powers concerned for the reform of the capitulatory system as contemplated in Annex II (c), and in default of agreement with his

“Britannic Majesty’s Government and the Egyptian Government for the modification of the provisions of that clause, His Britannic Majesty’s Government will join with the Egyptian Government in inviting the Council of the League of Nations to give a decision as to the numbers, status and functions of the British officials henceforth to be employed in the public security and police services in the light of the conditions then obtaining in regard thereto. It is understood that the two Governments shall adopt this decision as an agreement come to between them as provided for in Annex II (c) of the treaty.”

19. After having conveyed to Sarwat the offers just described, I requested your Lordship to convey to him the following personal message from me:—

“(1) Your Excellency will now have learned from Lord Lloyd the views of His Majesty’s Government upon the points raised by your Excellency regarding the Annex to the draft treaty. Your Excellency will, I am confident, recognise that upon these points, as upon a number of others arising from the text of the treaty, His Majesty’s Government have given evidence of a spirit of moderation and liberality, to the point of agreeing in some respects to offer interpretations which cannot be said to be implicit in the text upon which your Excellency and I agreed not long since. But I must emphasise that this process cannot be further continued and that so far as His Majesty’s Government are concerned, the last word has now been said. I am ready to continue negotiations, before and after the treaty has been signed, regarding the composition and functions of a British military mission to Egypt, the allocation of the Nile waters, and upon any minor questions which may be still outstanding respecting capitulatory reform. But as to the text of the treaty itself, I would impress upon your Excellency that His Majesty’s Government cannot contemplate further discussion.

“(2) Your Excellency agreed with me that the settlement embodied in the treaty afforded an equitable adjustment of the differences which have at times unhappily disturbed the good relations which should prevail between Egypt and Great Britain. It was our hope that by this treaty we should secure to Egypt her freedom and independence and her proper position

"in the comity of nations, whilst safeguarding the essential interests and obligations of Great Britain and the British Empire.

"(3) The freedom of action which Egypt will acquire under the treaty will, however, impose upon her corresponding responsibilities. I must remind your Excellency that at present no small share of these responsibilities falls upon His Majesty's Government under the Declaration of February 1922. If Egypt now refuses this settlement, His Majesty's Government will be obliged to insist upon a strict observance of the rights which they reserved to themselves by that Declaration.

"(4) But I am reluctant to believe that Egypt will fail to support your Excellency in your endeavour to establish an alliance between our two countries, and I urge your Excellency to place the treaty before your colleagues without delay and to proceed at the earliest possible moment to its signature. Your Excellency will readily understand that with the re-assembly of Parliament I cannot consistently with my obligations avoid giving a full account of our negotiations, which will necessitate the publication of the whole correspondence in the near future."

20. I trust that you will be able to report to me that Sarwat Pasha has recognised the force of these representations, and has decided to communicate the text of the treaty to his colleagues with a view to securing their approval of its early signature and publication.

I am, etc.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

The Secretary of State's final message did not fail of its effect, for on February 8, somewhat to my surprise, Sarwat Pasha informed me that he had decided to lay the draft before Nahas Pasha and the Cabinet immediately. The starting-gun had at last been fired, and in a short time we should know once for all the fate of the treaty. The Secretary of State's anxieties were at once inflamed by the news, and I received instructions to interview the King, the

Prime Minister and Nahas Pasha without delay, and to impress upon them the gravity of the decision which was now to be taken. The Secretary of State was in particular concerned with the two facts; on the one hand that the Prime Minister was now very naturally endeavouring to manœuvre so that the treaty could be jettisoned without involving his resignation, and on the other that the King, far from seeing anything horrifying in this suggestion, was inclined to think it rather a good one. Meanwhile Nahas Pasha was in a strong and comfortable position. Under cover of the negotiations, the delicate health of which naturally precluded His Majesty's Government from any action which might be construed as provocative or domineering, he had been pushing forward preparations for a vigorous legislative offensive. The previously described and most mischievous Omdeh's Law had been revived, an equally mischievous Arms Law was already in the Committee stage, the effect of which would be to make it impossible for the executive authority effectively to control the carrying of dangerous weapons; and finally, an Assemblies Law was about to be passed through Parliament, which would deprive the Police of all right to interfere with or to prevent public meetings, thus securing a fair field for all who were riotously inclined. He was getting along well with these measures during the time that our hands were tied by the treaty negotiations, and if they were made law the Wafd would be put into a position where they would shortly be able to proceed to revolution with every hope of success. As to the treaty, he had no responsibility, and was sure of public support, however unreasonable the attitude he might take up. In obedience to the Secretary of State's instructions I invited Nahas Pasha

to meet me on February 26, and in the meanwhile I had full discussions with His Majesty and with the Prime Minister. The King informed me that he had endeavoured to the best of his ability to bring Sarwat Pasha to the breach, but that the latter had been as elusive as ever and was still proposing to keep negotiations open: had not in fact yet shown the treaty to his colleagues in the Cabinet. The Prime Minister did not disguise his failure to communicate the treaty to his colleagues, or his intense reluctance to do so. He begged once more for further time, and was opposed to any action that might bring about a definite issue. Nahas Pasha, when I saw him, confined himself to asserting with a damnable iteration that it was quite useless to discuss this or any other treaty which did not provide for the complete evacuation of Egyptian territory by the British Army. He would not permit a British soldier to remain on Egyptian soil, be it Suez or Sinai. Without their removal, he said, we could expect nothing: with it we would buy Egyptian friendship, which would be an absolute guarantee of all our interests in Egypt.

Only a few days were now to intervene before the treaty and Sarwat Pasha together met their inevitable fate. On March 4 Sarwat handed me the official reply of the Egyptian Government to the proposals which he had put before them, and at the same time informed me that he had tendered his own resignation to the King. "My colleagues have reached the conclusion "that the draft, by reason both of its basic principles "and its actual provisions, is incompatible with the "independence and sovereignty of Egypt, and more- "over that it legalises occupation of the country by "British forces."

Nothing could have been clearer, more uncompromising, and more remote, both from the truth and from the genuine interests of Egypt.

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#### APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIV

##### DRAFT OF TREATY, 1927-8

His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the King of Egypt.

Being anxious to consolidate the friendship and to maintain and perpetuate the relations of good understanding between their respective countries,

And considering that in order to secure this object it is desirable to give precision to the relationship between the two countries by resolving and defining the outstanding questions at issue which formed the subject of the reservations which His Britannic Majesty's Government considered it necessary to make on the occasion of the Declaration of the 28th February, 1922,

Being anxious to eliminate the possibility of interference in the internal administration of Egypt,

And considering that these objects will best be achieved by the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and alliance, which in their common interest will provide for effective co-operation in the joint task of ensuring the defence and independence of Egypt;

Have agreed to conclude a treaty for this purpose, and have appointed as plenipotentiaries:

Who having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:—

*Article 1*

An alliance is established between the high contracting parties in consecration of their friendship, their cordial understanding and their good relations.

*Article 2*

His Majesty the King of Egypt undertakes not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude incompatible with the alliance or liable to create difficulties for His Britannic Majesty; not to oppose in foreign countries the policy followed by His Britannic Majesty and not to conclude with a foreign power any agreement which might be prejudicial to British interests.

*Article 3*

If, by reason of any attack or act of aggression whatsoever, His Majesty the King of Egypt should be involved in war for the defence of his territory or for the protection of the interests of his country, His Britannic Majesty will, subject always to the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations, come immediately to his aid in the capacity of belligerent.

*Article 4*

Should circumstances arise likely to imperil the good relations between His Majesty the King of Egypt and a foreign Power or threaten the lives or property of foreigners in Egypt, His Majesty will at once consult with His Britannic Majesty with a view to the adoption of the measures best calculated to solve the difficulty.

*Article 5*

In view of the co-operation between the two armies as contemplated in Article 3, the Egyptian Government pledge them-

selves to carry out the instruction and training of the Egyptian army in accordance with the methods of the British army; should the Egyptian Government deem it necessary to have recourse to the services of foreign officers or instructors, they will choose them from among British subjects.

### *Article 6*

In the event of His Britannic Majesty being menaced with or engaged in war, even though such war should in no way affect the rights and interests of Egypt, His Majesty the King of Egypt undertakes to furnish to His Britannic Majesty in Egyptian territory all the facilities and assistance in his power, including the use of his ports, aerodromes and all means of communication.

### *Article 7*

In order to facilitate and secure to His Britannic Majesty the protection of the lines of communication of the British Empire, and pending the conclusion at some future date of an agreement by which His Britannic Majesty entrusts His Majesty the King of Egypt with the task of ensuring this protection, His Majesty the King of Egypt authorises His Britannic Majesty to maintain upon Egyptian territory such armed forces as His Britannic Majesty's Government consider necessary for this purpose. The presence of these forces shall not constitute in any manner an occupation and will in no way prejudice the sovereign rights of Egypt.

After a period of ten years from the coming into force of the present treaty the high contracting parties will reconsider, in the light of their experience of the operation of the provisions of the present treaty, the question of the localities in which the said forces are to be stationed. Should no agreement be reached on this point, the question may be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. Should the decision of the League of Nations be adverse to the claims of the Egyptian Government, the question can, at their request and under the same conditions be reinvestigated at intervals of five years from the date of the League's decision.



*Article 8*

In view of the friendship of the two countries and of the alliance established by this treaty, the Egyptian Government when engaging the services of foreign officials will as a rule give preference to British subjects.

Nationals of other Powers will only be engaged if no British subjects possessing the necessary qualifications and fulfilling the requisite conditions are available.

*Article 9*

His Britannic Majesty undertakes to use all his influence with the Powers possessing capitulatory rights in Egypt to obtain the modification of the capitulatory régime now existing in Egypt so as to make it conform more closely with the spirit of the times and with the present state of Egypt.

*Article 10*

His Britannic Majesty will use his good offices for the admission of Egypt to the League of Nations, and will support the request which Egypt will present to this effect. Egypt for her part declares herself ready to accept the conditions prescribed for admission to the League.

*Article 11*

In view of the special relations created between the high contracting parties by the alliance, His Britannic Majesty will be represented at the Court of His Majesty the King of Egypt by an Ambassador, duly accredited, to whom His Majesty the King of Egypt will grant precedence over all other foreign representatives.

*Article 12*

Nothing in the present treaty is intended to or shall in any way prejudice the rights and obligations which devolve or may devolve upon either of the high contracting parties under the Covenant of the League of Nations.

*Article 13*

The arrangements for carrying certain provisions of the present treaty into effect form the annex to the present treaty, which shall have the same validity and duration as the treaty.

*Article 14*

The high contracting parties, although convinced that by reason of the precise definitions laid down above as to the nature of the relations between the two countries no misunderstanding is to be anticipated between them, agree, nevertheless, in their anxiety to maintain their good relations, that any disagreement on the subject of the application or of the interpretation of these provisions which they are unable to settle by direct negotiation shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

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## ANNEX

## I

(a) In default of previous agreement between the high contracting parties to the contrary, British personnel on the existing scale shall be maintained in the Egyptian Army with their present functions and on the conditions of the existing contracts during the period of ten years provided for in Article 7 of the treaty.

(b) The Egyptian army will not cause the personnel of the Egyptian army to be trained abroad elsewhere than in Great Britain. The Government of His Britannic Majesty for their part undertake to receive any mission which the Egyptian Government may send to Great Britain for this purpose.

(c) The armament employed by the Egyptian army shall not differ in type from that of the British army. His Britannic Majesty's Government undertake to use their good offices, whenever so desired by the Egyptian Government, to facilitate its supply from Great Britain.

(d) The privileges and immunities at present enjoyed by the British forces in Egypt shall continue. The Egyptian Government will continue to place at the disposal of the said forces, free of charge, the land and buildings at present occupied by them until such time as an alteration is made, in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 7 of the treaty, in the localities in which the said forces are stationed. When any such alteration is made, the land and buildings vacated shall revert to the Egyptian Government, who will provide, free of charge, in the localities to which the forces are transferred, equivalent accommodation to that provided by the land and buildings vacated.

(e) Unless the high contracting parties shall previously have agreed to the contrary, the Egyptian Government will prohibit the passage of air-craft over the territory situated on either side of the Suez Canal, and within 20 kilom. of it. This prohibition will not, however, apply to the forces of the high contracting parties or to services already established under existing agreements.

## II

(a) The Egyptian Government, in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government, will appoint a financial adviser. When it shall be so desired, the Powers at present exercised by the Commissioners of the Debt shall be conferred upon him. He will be kept informed of all legislative proposals, of such a nature that, to be applicable to foreigners, they would require in present circumstances the consent of the capitulatory powers. He shall be at the disposal of the Egyptian Government for all other matters in regard to which they may wish to consult him.

(b) Having regard to future changes in the judicial organization as envisaged in Article 9 of the treaty, the Egyptian Government will name, in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government, a judicial adviser. He shall be kept informed of all matters concerning the administration of justice in which foreigners are concerned, and will be at the disposal of the Egyptian Government for all other matters in regard to which they may wish to consult him.

(c) Until the coming into force, as the result of agreements between Egypt and the Powers concerned, of the reform of the capitulatory system contemplated in Article 9 of the treaty, the Egyptian Government will not modify, except in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government, the number, status and functions of the British officials engaged at the moment in the public security and police services.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ULTIMATUM ONCE MORE: AUTOCRACY STEPS IN

THE incidents of the final negotiations preceding the rejection of the treaty have been described in a despatch sent me by the Secretary of State on March 1. It detailed the efforts which had been made to bring the Prime Minister and his fortunes to the test, and the various attempts which he had made to evade or postpone the issue: it then set out in full the last personal message from the Secretary of State conveyed to Sarwat Pasha on February 25, urging the latter to delay no longer, but to communicate the treaty to his colleagues with a view to its early signature. It concluded by describing Sarwat Pasha's reply to this appeal, how he had expressed complete pessimism in regard to the fate of the treaty, and had said that his colleagues in the Government would commit themselves to no opinion until the Wafd had given a lead, which they would inevitably follow. On the same day as I received this despatch, I also received instructions as to what I was to do in the event of the treaty being rejected. "In this event your "Lordship should address an official note to the "Egyptian Government in the following terms: . . . "His Majesty's Government have for some time past "viewed with misgiving certain legislative proposals "introduced into the Egyptian Parliament which, if

“they were to become law, would be likely seriously  
“to weaken the hands of the authorities responsible  
“for the maintenance of order, and for the protection  
“of life and property in Egypt.

“So long as there was any prospect of the early  
“conclusion of a treaty of alliance between Great  
“Britain and Egypt which would define anew the  
“responsibilities and rights of the two parties, His  
“Majesty’s Government were content to refrain from  
“all comment in the expectation that they might rely  
“with confidence on the Egyptian Government to  
“avoid legislation which might make it impossible  
“for the Egyptian administration to discharge suc-  
“cessfully the increased responsibilities inherent in  
“the treaty régime.

“But now that the Egyptian Government have  
“declined to sign the treaty negotiated with Sarwat  
“Pasha, His Majesty’s Government cannot permit the  
“discharge of any of their responsibilities under the  
“Declaration of February 28th, 1922, to be endangered,  
“whether by Egyptian legislation of the nature indi-  
“cated above, or by administrative action, and they  
“reserve the right to take such steps as in their view  
“the situation may demand.”

The particular reference was of course to the Assemblies Bill, in regard to which the situation had been allowed to reach a point of extreme danger. At the end of the previous year, 1927, the Chamber of Deputies had annulled the law of 1914 defining and punishing unlawful Assemblies, and had proceeded to the consideration of a new bill dealing with this subject which modified the provisions of Law No. 14 of 1923. Whatever might have been thought of the law of 1914, the law of 1923 was unassailable upon any reasonable grounds, and had in fact received the

powerful support of Zaghlul himself when it had come under discussion in 1924. Zaghlul had even promised to make its provisions more ample in case of necessity. The present bill, however, sought to modify them so as to take from the executive—

(a) All power of preventing beforehand any meeting, whatever its nature or purpose.

(b) All power to guide demonstrations from one locality to another.

(c) The right to disperse a meeting which had become disorderly.

And finally, the present bill made provision for the resumption of meetings which had been dissolved on account of disorder, and for severe penalties upon officials who had dissolved meetings otherwise than in accordance with its provisions. It was, in fact, a direct incitement to disorder, and a deliberate attempt to discourage officials from doing their duty. On December 28 of the previous year, I had pointed out the dangers involved in its passage and recommended that steps should be taken to avert them. I was aware of the argument that the treaty negotiations might therefore be retarded, but I felt that the argument was unsound upon a long view. At this early stage it would be possible by private warnings to have the bill blocked without public intervention, whereas if we remained inactive and thereby gave an impression of weakness the extremists would be encouraged and the moderates disheartened. To this despatch no answer was received for a month: and on January 23, 1928, the Senate approved the law as it stood. It was not until the day following that the Secretary of State directed me to take no action, until the treaty position became clearer.

Fortunately for Egypt, a legislative technicality

delayed matters and made it necessary for the Assemblies Bill to be presented to the Senate a second time; but our position had now become very much weaker by the fact that not only the Government but Parliament in both Houses had fully committed themselves to the principle of the bill, and must consequently find it very hard to retract. The Wafd had, in fact, since the death of Zaghlul, reverted to a condition of irresponsible extremism very nearly resembling that of the old murder campaign days. Their legislative activity since the previous summer had been confined to measures designed quite clearly to suppress all non-political authority among the officials, to bring the Mudirs and the Omdehs in the provinces under their party influence, and to tie the hands of the Police in dealing with political agitation in the towns. With the passage of the Assemblies Law this campaign would have taken a very long step forward, and revolution would have been brought perceptibly nearer. It was, in fact, clear that if any chance had ever existed of accommodation, Zaghlul's death had destroyed it. He had had the power, and upon occasion the will, to restrain the wild men of his left wing. His successor, however, was completely at their mercy: he was their nominee and owed his appointment to them: he was devoid, moreover, of the peculiar gifts of mind and character which had made Zaghlul so powerful a leader.

Such was the man who as the result of the treaty negotiations was to find himself in charge of the Government of Egypt. For a few days after Sarwat Pasha's resignation rumour was busy with the possibilities of the situation. The Wafd, as the party holding a commanding position in Parliament, was obviously entitled to provide the Prime Minister. We



had no ground for lodging any objection to this, if Nahas Pasha and his supporters were ready to undertake the responsibility. But of course, in the background, the two capable and ambitious Liberals, Mahomed Mahmoud and Ismail Sidky, were busy pulling strings, and no one could quite tell what would be the result of their manipulations. On March 5 I saw the King, and received the impression that it was unlikely that anything would occur to prevent him from sending for Nahas Pasha. In this case there was every reason to look upon the future with serious apprehension: if the Wafd managed during their term of office to put through their legislative programme, in a few months they would have established a complete hold upon the executive in the Provinces, and very successfully disorganised the central administration—and serious trouble would shortly follow. The only hope lay in the warning which I had been instructed to convey to the Egyptian Government, which would greet the new Prime Minister on his assumption of office. If he refused to accept it we should be justified, upon our clear responsibility for law and order, in forcing a crisis.

On March 15 Nahas Pasha, at the King's request, agreed to form a Cabinet. It appeared that his object and that of his party was to cling to office as long as possible so as to consolidate their influence, and for this purpose to avoid controversy for the present: the fact that they desired to retain Liberal support was, moreover, a sure sign that they wished to avoid a break with His Majesty's Government. The trouble was that Nahas was admittedly not fit for the responsibilities he was now undertaking: whatever his intentions he had neither the capacity nor the ex-

perience to ensure that they would be carried out. Furthermore, his efforts to secure Liberal co-operation were not assured of success: at the Liberal Party meeting those in favour of such co-operation only just carried the day. Mahmoud Pasha was in favour, Sidky Pasha was against: and ultimately Mahmoud was the only Liberal of note to take a post in the Cabinet.

No doubt at this time Nahas Pasha's intentions were good, but it was not very long before his hand was forced by the extremists among his followers. His original idea had been to send no reply to the warning received from His Majesty's Government, and quietly to postpone the contentious legislation as far as possible. But he was soon stung by the extremists into forgetting that resolution, and on March 30 he quite unexpectedly framed and despatched an answer which was bound to provoke further discussion. To me a few days later he was profuse in protestations of friendship and goodwill, but unable to devise any means of extricating himself from the impasse in which the passage (for all practical purposes) of the Assemblies Bill had placed his Government. For several days, with the assistance of the King and by the additional agency of European officials, I endeavoured to demonstrate to the new Prime Minister that this bill was clearly one which no responsible authority could accept: and meanwhile I was receiving instructions from the Secretary of State as to what further steps were to be taken. On April 18 and 19 I received telegraphic orders to convey a verbal warning to Nahas Pasha: if that warning was disregarded it was to be followed up with a written ultimatum demanding repeal of the measures concerned. On April 29, all attempts

to negotiate with Nahas having failed, I handed him the following note: ". . . I have the honour to inform you, that since the presentation to Your Excellency of my Note of the 4th April, His Britannic Majesty's Government of Great Britain have watched with increasing concern the growing evidence of the intention of the Egyptian Government to proceed with certain legislation affecting public safety. This legislation, as Your Excellency must be fully aware, not merely from the verbal communication which I had the honour to make to you on the 19th instant, but from previous communications made both to your Excellency's predecessor and to yourself before and after the *aide-mémoire* which I had the honour to present to His Excellency Sarwat Pasha on the 4th March last is covered by the reservation reaffirmed in my Note of the 4th April.

"2. I am now instructed by His Britannic Majesty's Government to request your Excellency, as head of the Egyptian Government, immediately to take the necessary steps to prevent the Bill regulating public meetings and demonstrations from becoming law.

"3. I am instructed to request Your Excellency to give me a categorical assurance in writing that the above-mentioned measure will not be proceeded with. Should this assurance not reach me before 7 P.M. on May 2nd His Britannic Majesty's Government will consider themselves free to take such action as the situation may seem to require."

The reply which the Egyptian Government sent to this ultimatum began by stating that that Government could not recognise the right of Great Britain to intervene in Egyptian legislation, nor admit that it was bound by the Declaration of 1922: but pro-

fessed conciliatory sentiments and an intention to postpone further examination of the bill in question till next session. This answer clearly failed to give the undertaking demanded: in fact it said in so many words that the bill would be proceeded with. The time for permitting evasion had surely gone by. We had not presented our ultimatum until every opportunity had been afforded for compromise. The answer to that ultimatum evaded our demand and, what was more serious, repudiated the ground on which that demand was based. If these tactics on the part of Egypt were allowed to be successful, in the face of the ultimatum, the chances that any future or milder representations from His Majesty's Government would be heeded would be reduced to a minimum. As for the internal situation, the Wafd would gain an enormous access of confidence and prestige, and the credit of the Liberals would suffer severely by comparison. I reported all these arguments to the Secretary of State, and recommended that the Prime Minister should at once be invited to add to his reply a written assurance that the bill would not be proceeded with during his tenure of office.

The view taken by His Majesty's Government was, however, different. They were satisfied with the Egyptian reply, and preferred to leave the future to look after itself. They were content to believe that Nahas Pasha had been sufficiently humiliated, and that further demands might revive his popularity. For his part Nahas was delighted and relieved to find the crisis over and himself still in office. The result was hailed by the Wafdist Press as a personal triumph for him, and was entered to his credit in all save the most extreme circles. It was clear that he had much

improved his position throughout the country: it seemed inevitable, moreover, that before the end of the year we should again be in conflict with the extremists—our own position weakened and theirs much strengthened.

The prospect, which was by no means a happy one, was now radically reshaped by events which were outside our control. So long as we showed ourselves determined to maintain our declared position, there was no opportunity and no encouragement for those domestic influences which were opposed to the existing régime to show their hand. But the events of the past two months constituted an indication that the strength of our authority was relaxing, and it was not to be expected that, in the face of such symptoms, the influences to which I have referred would remain quiescent. The King had made little secret of his dislike of the Parliamentary régime, but when the Wafd had routed the attempt made by His Majesty's Government to secure a treaty with Egypt, had disregarded the ultimatum subsequently issued and found itself still firmly in the saddle, he naturally concluded that his opportunity had come and that an undeniable case could now at last be made for royal intervention. Constitutional Government had been the aim of our policy and we had maintained it untiringly in the face of constant difficulties; indeed, my own first care had been to restore it after the crisis of 1924. It now lay at the King's mercy.

Fortunately for his purpose he had the means to his hand. The Wafd, as we knew from reliable sources, had never believed that the warnings issued to Nahas Pasha in regard to the Assemblies Bill were seriously intended. The ultimatum had taken them completely by surprise, and they were still

rejoicing in their happy escape from so difficult a situation when, on June 17, Mahomed Mahmoud Pasha, the only Liberal member of the Government, resigned his office. The meaning of this step was not for long left in doubt, for two days later there was disclosed a public scandal which gravely affected the reputation of the Prime Minister. There appeared in the Press the text of an agreement concluded between Nahas Pasha, Wissa Wassef Bey, and Gaffar Fakhry Bey on the one side, and representatives of the mother of Prince Seif-ed-din on the other. By this agreement Nahas Pasha and his two legal confederates undertook to secure the handing over of the Prince's estate, which was now in the King's hands, to his mother in return for a fabulous fee, £E.130,000. This contract had been dated February 1927, at which time Nahas Pasha and Wissa Wassef Bey had been Vice-Presidents of the Chamber. The agreement was accompanied by a letter from Gaffar Fakhry pointing out that it was only "the intimate knowledge of Parliament" possessed by the three lawyers concerned that qualified them to undertake the endeavour. Gaffar Fakhry alleged, somewhat irrelevantly, that the letter was only a draft which had never actually been sent, but he did not deny the authorship; moreover, the reference in the letter to the abolition of the Royal Court Council, which was the Court competent to settle all dispute regarding Prince Seif-ed-din's property, was highly illuminating. The publication of this agreement and letter was a shattering blow to Nahas, for it gave to all his enemies an opportunity to allege that he meant to use political influence to carry out this lucrative undertaking. Two days later he received the *coup de grâce* in the shape of a summary dis-

missal from the Premiership. The same day Mahomed Mahmoud was invited to take his place and to form a Ministry, and shortly afterwards a royal decree was issued adjourning Parliament for the space of one month.

But this was not all. His Majesty King Fuad not unnaturally proceeded forthwith to take the fullest advantage of the opportunity now presented to him. The Parliamentary régime, his hated enemy, was defenceless. By a chance that might seem providential for his purposes, death had intervened to remove Zaghlul—his arch-antagonist. and the only person who made the Wafd formidable for him: it had cut off more than one of those prominent Liberal statesmen who had both the desire and the capacity to defend the established Constitution: and at this very advantageous moment a weapon of attack had been put into his hands. King Fuad moved rapidly to the final assault: on July 7 there was published in Cairo a petition from the New Ministry praying His Majesty to dissolve Parliament, together with a Royal Decree which dissolved both Houses and postponed elections and nominations of nominated Senators for three years. The Ministerial petition pointed out in forcible terms the deplorable effect which the Wafd political party had had upon the administration and the work and terms of service of officials, upon national unity and the effectiveness of Parliamentary government. The net result had been in fact that Parliamentary government had become incapable of carrying out the reforms which were essential for the welfare and prosperity of the country. The form of responsible government which had been the goal of British post-War policy and which King Fuad so much disliked was at an end. At first sight

this might appear to be a state of affairs so unsatisfactory as to demand our intervention. But unfortunately for any idea of intervention, the arguments which the Ministry had used to arraign the Wafd and to justify the dissolution were all of them undeniably and evidently true. The activities of the Wafd had in fact rapidly led to a condition of administrative chaos, in which all useful measures and projects remained suspended. The only solution which appeared possible was the one which Mahmoud Pasha had just proposed to the King. A few years of steady government, undisturbed by sectarian activities, might well serve to re-establish political sanity and poise, and to render possible a return to Parliamentary government, this time of a more moderate and more practical temper.

Moreover, had the action of the Ministry and the King been far less justified than in fact it was, it would have been very difficult to find any excuse even for indirect intervention from the Residency. Events had carried us a long way from the situation which obtained upon my first arrival in Egypt. There was now no Liberal-Wafd coalition operating against a *Cabinet d'affaires* and in support of the Constitution. Moreover, the crisis which preceded the dissolution had not been consequent upon any action of British authority, but was a purely domestic affair in which His Majesty's Government was neither directly nor indirectly implicated. Both Sir Austen Chamberlain and I took the view that a policy of strict non-intervention was the only policy possible in the circumstances. Indeed my chief concern was that the Wafd should not be encouraged to resistance by ill-judged expressions of regret in the English Press or on English public platforms for the temporary disap-



pearance of the constitutional régime. Material so provided had encouraged and fomented much disorder in the past in Egypt, and was only too likely to be the cause of further trouble at the present juncture.

For the moment, however, the Wafd were too much taken aback by the King's action to prepare any active plan of campaign, and I was able at the end of July to make my usual journey to England, leaving Mahomed Mahmoud Pasha settled in an as yet untried saddle, and King Fuad in a mood of happy confidence. It had to be recognised, however, that relations between the monarch and his principal adviser were not so strong and cordial as to warrant enduring optimism. Mahmoud Pasha was by temperament sensitive, and the state of his health was liable at times to exaggerate the moods of suspicion and gloom to which he was somewhat inclined. He required at this stage a generous measure of support and encouragement, but His Majesty's somewhat autocratic tendencies, encouraged as they now were by the success of his latest measures, did not perhaps predispose him to sympathetic forbearance. Indeed it was not long before symptoms of strained relations began to appear. The Prime Minister steadfastly proclaimed himself, and perfectly sincerely, to be a staunch adherent of the Constitution. The measures that had been taken in regard to the Egyptian Parliament were necessary, he constantly affirmed, because Parliament had degenerated under the influence of the Wafd into an instrument of anarchy and the suppression of political liberty. But whatever had happened or might happen to Parliament, the Constitution would not be affected but would one day be revived with renewed vigour in a new Parliament of solid, patriotic, and disinterested Egyptians. These

were unexceptionable sentiments, but past history did not warrant the immediate assumption that they would be entirely gratifying to the King. His Majesty had in the past shown himself prone to underestimate the influence of the Liberal Party, and to overvalue his own powers. He was now in a strong tide of success, and might well be carried by it to the conclusion that he could dispense with that element in his Ministry which leaned towards the Constitution; or that he could, at any rate, shift the balance of power more definitely into the hands of those to whom autocracy was not unwelcome. His Minister of Finance, Ali Pasha Maher, was one of those who had made no secret of his belief in autocratic government, and there were other members of the Cabinet who were known to share his views. Actually it was in the Ministry of Finance that the first of the Prime Minister's domestic difficulties arose. In August Ali Pasha Maher gave out that it was his intention to revive the post of Second Under-Secretary and to give it to Hussein Sirry Bey, the Surveyor-General. The scheme was ostensibly one of mere departmental reorganisation, but its practical effect would have been to give to the Palace Party a sure footing in the most important of the Egyptian Ministries. The proposal was, however, dropped when the Prime Minister showed himself firmly opposed to it; but those who wished could easily see in this incident the King's first indirect assault upon constitutional influence in the Government.

In October a further incident occurred which was alleged by the cognoscenti to be direct evidence of the King's determination to move towards autocratic government, and to dispense as soon as possible with his constitutional allies. It had been suggested by

Mahmoud Pasha, when forming his Cabinet in the early summer, that Ismail Sidky Pasha should be appointed to the post of Auditor-General. The post was not then in existence, but was to be created forthwith. The suggestion was from all points of view a sound one. Ismail Pasha Sidky was a strong candidate for the Premiership which had fallen to Mahomed Mahmoud, and was naturally, therefore, not willing to serve under his rival. On the other hand, it would be a great strength to the new régime if his services were secured to it, especially in a post where his acknowledged financial capacities could come into full play; while to leave him outside and independent of the new Government would have been most unwise, in view of his influence and ability. But Ismail Pasha Sidky, if he had any political affiliations, was a Liberal of the Left, and he had in the past never been careful of the King's favour, nor been at much pains to conceal his enmity to the Palace. If the King, said the wiseacres, were really in favour of a National Government the purpose of which was to revive the Constitution, he would accept Sidky's appointment as a wise and necessary step. But June, July, and August passed without the publication of the necessary decree. In September it was known that Sidky Pasha had resigned his directorships, and still his appointment was not gazetted: and in October the question had assumed the dimensions of a Cabinet crisis, with the opposition newspapers gleefully exulting over the split which they predicted in the Government. How far the King's apparent hostility to the appointment would be carried remained for long uncertain. On December 10 he offered Sidky the proposed post, provided that the incumbent was not made irremovable for five years, as originally

proposed. Sidky Pasha replied that he had not asked for the appointment, and did not wish to have it on those terms, but still an open breach was avoided. Meanwhile the Prime Minister had succumbed to an illness which confined him to his bed, and all that could be done was to hold matters in uneasy suspense till his recovery. It was the best that could be made of a bad business, and unfortunately it was not the only incident upon which the Opposition could joyfully fasten as indicative of strained relations between the King and his principal adviser. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Wakfs, and Public Health were to be allotted to new incumbents, and the King was also procrastinating in regard to the appointment of a Minister at London, although the name of Doctor Hafiz Afifi had been submitted to him by the Prime Minister with a strong recommendation.

The unfortunate effect of all these incidents, whatever their real cause, was to encourage the members of the Wafd still to cling to their old allegiance. They were still able to believe that their discomfiture was only temporary, and that the régime of Nahas Pasha might soon return. Once it became apparent that there was a sound and durable understanding between the King and his Prime Minister, the followers of Nahas would quickly melt away from him. But, whatever the causes, the King was unable as yet to act so as to make such an understanding apparent, and the hopes for improvement in the Egyptian situation were thereby postponed.

But if the political situation had not improved in accordance with anticipations, administratively the Government's record had been a good one during the early months of its existence. In the first place, there had been a business-like statement of contem-

plated measures, and this was a refreshing change from the monotonous alternation between political rhetoric and non-committal platitudes to which Egyptian audiences had for so long been accustomed. In the second place, active steps had been taken to translate proposals into action. In particular the atmosphere in the schools had been changed very much for the better by the strict enforcement of discipline. It had been made clear to everybody that the political delinquencies of the students would be visited upon the teachers—a warning which had an immediate and most salutary effect. In regard to the important irrigation projects, upon which discussion had proceeded so long, a decision had already been taken to proceed with the raising of the Assuan Dam and with the construction of a new Dam at Gebel Aulia. These two works would serve to irrigate 700,000 acres of new land and preparations were to be commenced forthwith. Measures were also being prepared for improving and cleansing the drinking-water supplies, and for still further developing the medical and hospital services in the countryside. Egypt was in fact to have a salutary dose of good administration, and progressive legislation, to counterbalance the feast of politics in which she had been indulging until now. If the Prime Minister and the King could satisfactorily compose the differences which were still discerned between them, the Wafd would have little support. Indeed it was already publicly pinning its hopes of a return to power to the possibility of a Labour Government being returned at the next year's elections in England—a Government which, it confidently believed, would intervene at once to restore the Parliamentary régime in Egypt. And in the end it was this very event which did save it from disruption and

restore it for a brief and deplorable moment to the control which it had summarily lost.

One other event in the year 1928—now drawing very near to its close—must be chronicled. On September 22 Abdel Khalek Sarwat Pasha—*l'homme des heures difficiles*—died suddenly in Paris. He was perhaps the last of the statesmen of the Egyptian Liberal Party, who had both the will and the power to defend the Constitution from internal assault: and the Wafd undoubtedly expected that, had he lived, his influence in England and in Egypt would be exerted towards the revival of Parliamentary life. He would have had every reason so to exert himself, for he had taken a large part in creating the Constitution of Egypt and felt a parental affection for it: moreover, he entertained a personal dislike for Mahmoud Pasha, whose position was considerably strengthened by his death. But his health had been seriously undermined by the strain of the previous winter, and there is little doubt that the negotiations which led to his political downfall contributed also to his premature death. Twice Prime Minister of Egypt, he had succeeded in establishing himself in the respect of his countrymen by the real importance of his achievements. Possessed of a great personal charm, a keen and supple intellect, a high degree of political ability, and a self-mastery which was rare in the councils of Egypt, he had pursued a career, not always unchequered, but on a long view extremely successful. His weaknesses were sufficiently apparent even in the more successful periods of his career. He was indeed fundamentally an opportunist, and his ingenuity was to some extent counterbalanced by a temperamental lack of decision—never more clearly displayed than in the negotiations which preceded

his final resignation. But even with these failings he had acquired the position, both in Egypt and in England, of being regarded as the one person competent to take charge of affairs in a crisis—the phrase *l'homme des heures difficiles* exactly summarised his public reputation.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE NILE WATERS AGREEMENT: A REAL STEP FORWARD AT LAST

THE year 1929 opened upon a scene that was in many respects far from satisfactory. The consolations which could be discerned by those genuinely interested in the welfare of Egypt were only of a negative character, and there were on the other hand some grounds for a despondent view. On the one side it could be computed that there was no reason in the domestic situation to fear an early reversal of the Government. The country, though not in the least enthusiastic, was not actively hostile, and showed itself disinclined for energetic hostility. Nahas Pasha was still leader of the Wafd, and this fact was perhaps the most adequate safeguard against the revival of its power. On the other side it was seen that the King was not yet prepared to allow his Prime Minister to draw any real strength to himself, or to look with equanimity upon the formation of a really national Government. The Prime Minister himself had been suffering a long illness which had caused an inevitable stagnation in affairs. He was still suspicious of His Majesty's attitude towards him, and inclined to counter the intrigues he suspected by movements of his own which did not enhance the good reputation of the administration. In fact, the Government was making little



political headway, the situation was not improving as the optimists had hoped, and there was less and less ground for anticipating a return to sane and reasonable Parliamentary government. Most important of all the adverse factors was the imminence of a General Election in England and the belief that it would return a government which would not acquiesce in the continuance of an unconstitutional régime.

It was unfortunate, therefore, that one of the first steps to be taken in the new year should be the decision to defer Nahas Pasha, and his lieutenants Wassa Wassef Bey and Gaffar Fakhry Bey to a Council of Discipline on the ground of their unprofessional conduct in the Seif-ed-din case. The most that could be hoped for as the outcome of such action was a reprimand, which would leave matters much where they were, while the acquittal which did in fact result was a triumph for the Wafd and a severe blow for the prestige of the Government. It rallied Egyptian sympathies in support of Nahas Pasha, and made it easy to depict the Government as tyrannous and anti-national. Hardly more profitable was the next step—a comprehensive scheme for re-shuffling the personnel of the Department of the Interior, which involved the retirement of several Mudirs. The acceptance of this proposal by the King coincided with the withdrawal by Ismail Sidky Pasha of his candidature for the post of Auditor-General, and rumours at once began to spread that the two transactions formed part of one unholy bargain, whereby the Prime Minister secured his own adherents in office in the Mudirates, while the King got rid of the unwanted presence of Sidky Pasha.

But in spite of the lack of political achievement,

perhaps even because of it, very definite and important advances were made in the direction of settling some of the urgent questions which had been held in suspense for so long between the Governments of Egypt and Great Britain. In a speech which he made in May 1929 Mahmoud Pasha referred at length to these questions: he claimed that the present Government had tackled them with "calm, prudence, frankness, and good faith. It met with great success in its work, and an agreement was concluded in regard to the financial questions and the greater irrigation projects." The claim was to a large extent justified, for in addition to arriving at an agreed settlement of the various financial demands arising out of the War, a settlement which was largely due to the tact and ability of Sir F. Leith-Ross, the very delicate question of the payment of the Ottoman Loan of 1855 had also been adjusted.

In regard to the greater irrigation projects, the subject was of such importance, both in its political and administrative aspects, that it deserves treatment at some length. Mahmoud Pasha described the result of the negotiations which had taken place between us as follows: "Egypt's present and future needs of water were guaranteed, and her rights remained intact. The text of the agreement", he said, "is not the only thing which inspires confidence. Its spirit and the goodwill evinced by the two parties, and their willingness to co-operate, make us more confident." The result of the prolonged negotiations was in fact a very pregnant example of the methods by which agreement with Egypt could be achieved, and the reserved points gradually settled. It went indeed a very long way in the direction of a practical settlement of one of these points, for it deprived of all real

effectiveness the agitators' often repeated cry that Great Britain was prepared to coerce Egypt by cutting off her water supply—a cry which had for many years been one of the principal methods of creating friction in regard to the Sudan.

The negotiations which finally brought agreement had their origin in Lord Allenby's ultimatum of 1924, issued after the murder of the Sirdar. The sixth clause of that ultimatum had in the end been modified so as to secure the creation of an impartial Nile Commission, which was constituted in 1925. Its report was never accepted in terms by His Majesty's Government or the Egyptian Government, because such acceptance became a part of the wider negotiations for a treaty, and when these negotiations broke down, the question of the irrigation projects remained still undecided. Mahmoud Pasha's Government had put the commencement of these projects at the head of its programme, and realised from the first—that what was indeed clear to all concerned—that the first essential was an agreement with His Majesty's Government upon the conditions under which works for the benefit of Egypt outside purely Egyptian territory would be carried out. This involved the vexed question of "Nile control"—a question the implications of which had been considerably altered by the Declaration of 1922, and by the state of affairs which in practice had emerged in the Sudan. The important point was, that whereas "Nile control" was a question of large political implications which must involve the whole problem of the status of the Sudan—a problem reserved in 1922—the immediate need was not a political settlement but a working agreement. The point was wisely recognised by both parties to the negotiations. Whatever claims might

be adduced in regard to "Nile control", the fact was that Egypt could neither coerce the Sudan administration nor take any action without its co-operation. The facts had at last asserted themselves. So long as Egyptian politicians continued—and were encouraged to continue—in the discussion of political claims, the facts could be ignored, because nobody was endeavouring to take any practical steps. But now that political activity was relegated to the background, and we had a Government in Egypt really anxious to give proof of administrative capacity, the facts took control of the situation again. It had to be realised, on the one hand, that undivided control of the Nile was no longer in the hands of Egypt, and on the other, that Egypt had natural and historic rights in the waters of the Nile, which could never be disregarded. Once this stage had been reached, there was no insuperable difficulty in arriving at an arrangement which preserved the economic interests both of Egypt and the Sudan quite unimpaired, and provided for an amicable settlement of disputes that might arise in the future. The final agreement, which was reached early in May 1929, began by accepting the findings of the Nile Commission of 1925: it recognised the necessity of a greater supply of water for the development of the Sudan, and agreed that such an increase should be made for this purpose "as does not infringe Egypt's natural and historical rights in the waters of the Nile, and its requirements in respect of agricultural extension". The agreement then went on to set out the provisions arrived at for co-operation in the Sudan between Egypt and the Sudan and His Majesty's Government, and for the amicable settlement of future disputes. It concluded "The present agreement can in no way be considered

“as affecting the control of the river, which is reserved  
“for free discussion between the two Governments in  
“the negotiations on the question of the Sudan”.<sup>1</sup>

Thus for the first time since Egypt secured a measure of independence, an agreement, even though provisional, had been secured upon a question which had long been the subject of acute political controversy. That such an achievement had been possible was due to our continued insistence upon a due regard to the facts of the situation, and to those interests which we could not permit to be ignored. It was Egypt who in all cases stood to gain by thus regarding the facts and apprehending our determination, and in this particular case she had gained the possibility of a rich development of her resources. It was Egypt also who in every case stood to lose by disregarding the real position. We did not help her at all, so long as, by vacillation, we encouraged her in such disregard, and we postponed indefinitely the very object which we had set ourselves—a friendly and comprehensive understanding with her.

Very soon after the satisfactory conclusion of these negotiations, the General Election took place in England, and in June 1929 the Labour Government took office, and Mr. Henderson stepped into the room of Sir Austen Chamberlain at the Foreign Office. At the time there were no very critical questions demanding consideration as far as Egypt was concerned: but there was one matter which, after the Labour Government had taken office and at the time of my resignation, was given considerable prominence. This matter was being discussed during April and May of 1929 between the Secretary of State and myself, and it was subsequently vested with an im-

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, May 11, 1929.

portance which makes it necessary to describe it in some detail.

It will be remembered that the sovereign powers of the Egyptian State had been limited, even before we came to be intimately concerned in Egyptian affairs, by the Capitulations. Among the limitations thus imposed, one of the most important and the most resented was the fact that foreign residents, subjects of Capitulatory Powers, were exempt, unless with the consent of the Power concerned, from the payment of certain taxes. In April 1929, Doctor Hafiz Afifi, now Egyptian Minister in London, raised the question indirectly with the Foreign Office by setting forth that the present Egyptian Government were desirous of examining the possibilities of certain new taxes in Egypt, and suggesting that the time was now ripe for His Majesty's Government to make some public profession of their sympathy with the principle that foreign residents should bear their fair share of the burden of taxation. Dr. Hafiz Afifi mentioned specific taxes in regard to which the Egyptian Government hoped that such an expression of sympathy might be forthcoming. These were:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| (1) Ghaffir tax.   | (3) Petrol tax. |
| (2) Municipal tax. | (4) Stamp duty. |

On May 1, Sir Austen informed me that he proposed to express the "sympathy in principle" for which Dr. Hafiz Afifi was asking—in other words, that he would inform the Egyptian Government that His Majesty's Government was favourably disposed to the general proposal that British subjects should pay the four taxes referred to. He asked for my comments without delay, and on May 6 I telegraphed to him that I concurred with him fully in regard to the Ghaffir tax; that in regard to the Municipal tax the

present state of affairs was undoubtedly most unsatisfactory, but that until concrete proposals were framed for clearing up the basis of municipal taxation, it would be wiser not to give "the sympathy in "principle" desired; that in regard to the petrol tax I concurred, but should like to see a horse-power tax substituted for a petrol tax: that in regard to the stamp duty the case was upon an entirely different footing, since, while the other taxes were by way of payment for services rendered, the stamp duty was imposed solely for the purpose of adding to existing revenue, and the state of the Government's revenues clearly did not justify its imposition.

Thus it will be seen that in two instances I concurred fully in the Secretary of State's proposal, in one I suggested delay, and only in one did I disagree with him—for reasons which I fully set out, and which appeared to me after consultation, not only with my Advisers but also with the Governor of the National Bank of Egypt and with the Presidents of the Alexandria and Cairo Chambers of Commerce, to be at least ponderable. The Secretary of State was entirely unable to share this view—on May 9 he replied to me in a telegram which contained the following comments in regard to the municipal tax and the stamp duty: "The gist of the Egyptian complaint is that, for such "services as they render, the Egyptians have to pay "and foreigners are not legally liable. I am quite aware "of the inefficiency of municipalities in Egypt and "elsewhere, but it is quite impossible for me to defend "the indefensible, and it is not sufficient that I should "confine myself to an empty expression of academic "sympathy on such an occasion. . . . It is impos- "sible to refuse an expression of sympathy to the "imposition of a stamp duty on the ground that it

“constitutes an addition to the existing sources of revenue. . . . In these circumstances I feel it right to agree generally with the request made to me by Hafiz ‘Affi.” It would be foolish for me to deny that I was somewhat surprised by this despatch. But all it appeared to amount to was this—that the Foreign Office had informed me that they would be glad to receive my “comments or suggestions” on their proposal, and having received them together with the considered views of the most influential commercial opinions in Egypt had summarily rejected them. I did not therefore attach any serious importance to the incident, until on May 28 the Secretary of State addressed to me a despatch which clearly showed that in Whitehall the comments and suggestions offered by the High Commissioner and so solidly supported by all interested or competent opinion were regarded as seriously heretical. Indeed, the opening paragraph of the despatch could mean nothing else: “The correspondence which recently “passed between Your Lordship and myself in regard “to the suggested extension of certain Egyptian taxes “to British subjects in Egypt has led me to think that “it may be convenient to Your Lordship and is in itself “desirable that I should restate briefly the principles “upon which His Majesty’s Government desire to “regulate their policy in Egypt.” The only conclusion that I was clearly intended to draw from this was that in offering the opinion which I had offered I had departed from the principles of British policy. The remainder of the despatch was occupied with the promised restatement of those principles and deserves, I think, to be quoted in full.

. . . Imperial considerations and the necessity of safeguarding the communications between the different parts of the Empire



have caused His Majesty's Government in the past not only to assume a position of authority in Egypt outweighing that of any other foreign government, but also to stand between Egypt and the rest of the world, protecting her from any external pressure. It is the vital character of the imperial interests thus safeguarded which requires the presence on Egyptian soil of British armed forces and the retention of that special influence which His Majesty's Government exercise through His Majesty's High Commissioner.

From the situation thus created certain consequences flow, secondary in their nature but of the utmost importance. Where the influence of His Majesty's Government prevails, and where their powerful protection is afforded, patent misgovernment cannot be tolerated, and since His Majesty's Government have formally announced that they will not tolerate foreign intervention they are bound to see that a reasonable régime is secured for foreign inhabitants.

Because the interests at stake are of supreme importance to the safety and well-being of the British Empire, His Majesty's Government reserved by their Declaration of the 28th February, 1922, certain matters for their own determination, but even in these cases it is the desire of His Majesty's Government to act with, and where possible, through the Egyptian Government, respecting in the largest measure possible the liberties and independence which by the same declaration they conceded to Egypt.

It is not in the interest of His Majesty's Government to intervene in the internal affairs of Egypt further than is necessary to secure the political objects defined above. The influence which they must ever possess in the councils of Egypt, whether actual or potential, will be best secured by ensuring that the closest harmony shall always govern the relations between the Residency and the Government, and these conditions can only obtain if the interventions of His Majesty's Government into the purely internal affairs of Egypt are reduced to the minimum.

The very fact that in certain limited but most important cases the intervention of His Majesty's Government must be made effective, no matter what the cost, renders it the more necessary that their intervention should be strictly confined to matters of real importance. Since in certain cases it is essential

that the wishes of His Majesty's Government should prevail, their influence must not be frittered away on other and less important matters. Above all, in order that their intervention when it takes place may be decisive, it must never be invoked to cover an abuse or to resist reasonable reforms. Save during the period of the War, Egypt has always enjoyed a very large measure of autonomy, though the degree of autonomy may have varied from time to time according to the political situation of the moment. Applying the principles here laid down, I hold at the present time that, in considering whether in any particular case recourse is to be had to intervention in the internal affairs of Egypt, the criterion to be applied should not be whether the object aimed at is merely desirable, but whether it is necessary in order to safeguard the interests of the Empire as defined in the earlier paragraphs of this despatch.

The difference between the situation occupied by His Majesty's Government in Egypt and that which they occupy in the Sudan lends point to the observations set forth above. In the Sudan, though the condominium continues to be recognised, the responsibility of His Majesty's Government to the population is direct, and to meet it it is necessary for them to feel sure that in any particular case their orders shall be obeyed. In Egypt the responsibility is indirect and contingent, and only in a very limited category of affairs can it be necessary that the authority of His Majesty's Government shall be exercised, though it is to be hoped that when the Egyptians realise the strict limits which His Majesty's Government place upon their own activities, they will be the more inclined to seek on other points of difficulty or delicacy the friendly counsel which His Majesty's Government will always be willing to afford them.

This exposition of policy will, I hope, have made clear to your Lordship the reasons which inspired my reply to the representations made to me by Dr. Hafiz Afifi during his recent visit to London. I am not convinced that the maintenance of foreign privilege in Egypt, *per se*, is a cause for the defence of which His Majesty's Government is required to exercise pressure on the Egyptian Government. The Capitulations have disappeared, or are in a fair way to disappear, in every country

in which they have hitherto obtained, and sound policy would seem to require the gradual acceptance of a similar evolution in Egypt unless it can be shown in any particular case that there are cogent reasons for maintaining them. None such were evident to me in the question of the applicability of the Egyptian taxes under discussion to British subjects, nor could I bring myself to believe that British influence could be strengthened or the interests of British subjects permanently served by insistence on the maintenance of an invidious and indefensible exemption from a fair contribution to services of which they share the benefits.

I am, etc.,

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

The main points emphasised in this statement were, first, that British intervention in Egypt should be strictly confined to matters of real importance, and second, that the maintenance of foreign privilege was not a matter in regard to which pressure should be exercised upon the Egyptian Government. It would have been possible, of course, to point out in reply that I had not suggested any intervention, or any pressure: that in fact no question either of "intervention" or of "pressure" had been raised. The Egyptian Government had asked His Majesty's Government for a concession, and I had advanced the view that the request was in one case not justified by the facts, but that wherever it was so justified it should be granted. The point that was uppermost in my mind in making this recommendation was that, in the present state of our relations with Egypt, it was most unwise for us without indisputable justification to make concessions which had the practical effect of always altering the *status quo* in Egypt's favour. The cardinal point in the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government was most clearly the maintenance unim-

paired of the *status quo* until such time as Egypt should be prepared to negotiate a reasonable treaty—and not only was this the very basis of our policy, it was also an essential point in our strategy, and therefore doubly important.

I felt it most unfortunate that the existing Government in England should be closing its relations with me on a note of disagreement, however unimportant the particular point at issue. I realised, however, that the matter was not so simple as it appeared on the surface, but was, on the contrary, embarrassing enough to cause serious irritation. It will be remembered that, not long before the time of which I am writing, His Majesty's Government had made an important declaration in regard to extra-territorial rights in China. The Egyptian Government were not slow to realise the value to them of this declaration, and no doubt they subtly insinuated that, as in China, so in Egypt, a policy of disregarding the views of foreign residents and making concession to national demands would be acclaimed as equitable and humane. On the other side, the British Government were placed by their policy in China in a situation where they had clearly very little alternative but to accept its logical consequences in other parts of the world. This fact, of which I was sadly aware at the time, could not, I think, have been held as a sufficient reason for not representing to Whitehall the point of view of British and foreign business men and residents in Egypt, but it no doubt contributed to the severity with which my representations were treated. And when I re-examined those representations I could hardly find in them ground for the view that I had withstood a just claim advanced by Egypt. The position was that British

subjects were exempt under the Capitulations from the four taxes to which Dr. Hafiz Afifi referred: that the British Government was being asked to agree in principle to the removal of this exemption before—in the case of the municipal tax—the Egyptian Government had evolved any satisfactory method of assessing the tax,—and before—in the case of the stamp duty—any case had been made out for the necessity of the tax at all. In fact the concession would amount in practice to a complete relinquishment of the capitulatory privileges as far as taxation was concerned, and these privileges were by no means a matter which concerned us alone. The question that I felt impelled to ask myself was this: was our policy of securing a reasonable agreement with Egypt likely to be advanced by such an ample concession at this stage? The four points which we had reserved in 1922, and by which Egypt's independence was qualified, still stood. It was still essential to maintain those reservations unimpaired. The moment for generous concessions on our part would arrive when Egypt on her side showed herself ready to make even reasonable concessions. And by further concessions, which could not easily be justified before that moment arrived, we were emptying our hands quite unnecessarily of counters that would be very valuable to us at the conference table. It was at the least arguable that such a standpoint was more consistent with declared British policy than a readiness to surrender in anticipation: unless, indeed, British policy had invisibly changed, . . . 'though year by year is 'nought to see, so delicate its motions be.'

Moreover, the lessons of the more remote past and of the most recent past alike had shown that a policy of mere concession even at the conference table, had

no effect at all except that of hardening Pharaoh's heart, and making the Egyptian more intransigent than ever. And finally this same question of the Capitulations was being approached in a comprehensive form that for Egypt's true interests was of far greater practical interest than that of taxation. It was, to say the least of it, strange, therefore, that at such a time an urgent need should have been discovered to make concessions in regard to a single item in capitulatory privileges—concessions which would have had a most prejudicial effect upon the larger negotiations now contemplated in regard to the Capitulations.

It will be remembered that among the many jurisdictions existent in Egypt, that of the Mixed Courts had been the triumphant creation of Egyptian diplomacy in days before the British Occupation. These Mixed Courts were manned by judges appointed by the Egyptian Government and by the various foreign Powers who had been parties to the instrument which created them. They exercised jurisdiction over cases to which foreigners were parties, and had also a very limited jurisdiction over foreigners. Now, and for a very long time past, it has been a laudable ambition of the Egyptian Government to do away with the impossibly cumbrous system whereby criminal charges against foreigners had to be tried in the Consular Court of the Power to which the foreigner concerned was a subject. The obvious method by which this could be most successfully achieved was by a gradual transference of their jurisdiction, *i.e.* the Consular jurisdiction, to the Mixed Courts—a process which would be consistent with steady progress and, moreover, contained some possibility of being found acceptable by the Powers.

It was accordingly upon these lines that Sarwat

Pasha had been endeavouring to proceed during the days of his last tenure of the Premiership. But the collapse of the treaty negotiations, and the advent to power of the Wafd had for the time prevented all possibility of further progress, and it was not until the autumn of 1928 that action seemed again advisable. At this time the Government of Mahmoud Pasha took up again the former proposals for a degree of reorganisation of the Mixed Courts which would at last pave the way for an enlargement of their jurisdiction at the expense of the Consular Courts. The Egyptian Government hoped that these proposals might form a basis for discussion at a joint Conference of representatives of the Powers. The latter, however, were clearly inclined to prefer the method of separate negotiation. The reasons for this difference of view could in all probability be fairly stated as follows. An extension of the jurisdiction of the Mixed Courts was only acceptable to the Powers in return for safeguards. Such safeguards would naturally take the form of appointments of foreigners in the personnel of the Courts, since such appointments would, to the foreign colonies, be the most obviously conclusive evidence that their rights would not be overlooked. When such appointments were in question each individual Power preferred to bargain separately with Egypt rather than in conference.

The Egyptian Government thus found themselves in a position of difficulty: the extension of jurisdiction of the Mixed Courts was an undeniable advantage, but, viewed politically and by Egyptians in the mass, it would count as nothing against the creation of posts to be occupied by foreigners. Confronted with this problem, they lost patience, and early in 1929 began to suggest that the proposals for limited

advance should be dropped, and that the question of the general transfer of jurisdiction from the Consular to the Mixed Courts should forthwith be brought under consideration.

The Secretary of State's view upon this proposal was that it was not one to be encouraged—a view in which, needless to say, I concurred. “The aspect of “it”, he wrote, “which strikes me with particular force “is its seeming un wisdom from the Egyptian Govern-“ment’s own point of view. It has taken some two “years to induce the Powers to come within measur-“able distance of accepting certain limited changes in “the present régime, and it seems, therefore, quite “unreasonable to hope that what amounts almost to a “total abolition of the existing system could be ac-“cepted without more ado. Moreover, if, as seems only “too probable, the new proposals fail to command the “assent of the Powers, it may not be easy to revert to “a policy of gradual transfer, on which a start is now “not far from being possible. Again, looking at the “matter from the Egyptian standpoint, if the limited “changes . . . were put into force and in practice “worked well . . . the Egyptian case for further and “more sweeping changes would be greatly strength-“ened, and in the course of time might become virtu-“ally unanswerable.”<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of State therefore proposed to talk to Dr. Hafiz Afifi in London, and to advise him strongly that it would be better to abandon this sweeping proposal. The Secretary of State did not, curiously enough, refer to this as intervention, but such it undoubtedly was.<sup>2</sup> It was

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd, April 11, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* page 294 *ante*: The reader will see that in the Despatch there quoted the Secretary of State laid down that intervention was only justified if “necessary in order to safeguard the interests of the Empire”. But in this case he was intervening in order to prevent what he himself described as an act of “un wisdom from the Egyptian Government’s own point of view”.



moreover fully in consonance with the principles of our policy, for it was beyond contradiction that demonstration, and demonstration alone, could make the Egyptian case unanswerable. If they could give proof that they were capable of administering impartial justice, the Consular Courts could not endure, any more than foreign exemption from taxes could endure, in the face of a proved capacity for impartial assessment and collection.

It was, therefore, most unfortunate that at this moment impatience and over-confidence should have been engendered in Egypt by the anticipation that a change of British policy would be the result of the forthcoming General Election. This was indeed what the majority of Egyptians confidently expected—and the expectation was not entirely disappointed. The position of the Wafd had been maintained throughout the country very largely because it was thought that a change in British policy would restore them to power before long. It was bound to take time—probably a long time—to weaken the superstitious attachment to the Wafd which was widely felt by the fellaheen. The Wafd had been linked for so long with the name of Saad Zaghlul—and that name had mystical connotations. It meant great dreams of vague liberties and vaguer material blessings, and however unworthy the shoulders upon which Saad's mantle fell, the mantle itself retained its magical properties. Time alone could weaken this hypnosis, and time was not yet to be allowed to do its work, for in May 1929 the Conservative Government in England fell heavily from office, and a Labour Government took its place, with immediate repercussions in Egypt which will be described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SOCIALIST INTERVENTION

It was not long after the beginning of June 1929 that the Labour Cabinet took up the reins of administration in England. At this time the Egyptian situation was, from the point of view of His Majesty's Government, in many respects satisfactory and reassuring. The Egyptian Government was convinced—and was publicly announcing the conviction—that the most important thing for Egypt's progress was good relations with Great Britain. The Prime Minister of Egypt, so recently as June 10, had said in a public speech that Egypt's one need was "stabiliser *"notre vie politique, ou, en d'autres termes, compléter notre indépendence"*". He had further asserted that the only possible means of achieving this end *"était l'entente avec la Grande-Bretagne"*, and he averred that *"le calme et la tranquillité qui caractérisent notre situation actuelle . . . et l'absence complète de vues qu'on pourraient interpréter comme hostiles à la Grande-Bretagne, tout cela nous porte à croire que les points en conflit trouvent leur solution"*.

This brief sketch of the situation was accurate enough in outline. Extremist activity was not menacing for the moment—the country was concerning itself very little with politics, and an administrative

success on the part of the present Government might well prove to be the turning-point towards a real "stabilisation". But there was no doubt at all that that turning-point had not yet been reached: and in order that the situation might be given every chance of developing towards it, it was above all important that things should be left as they were for the present. There were plenty of dangers threatening—dangers which might effectively disturb the situation, but we now had it in our power to curb these threatening tendencies, and prevent them from translating themselves into effective action, and it was to this task that, in Egypt's interests, all our energies should have been bent.

Unfortunately, however, this was not to be. The new British Government stirred the calm waters at once into violent commotion. King Fuad was now in Berlin, paying a State visit to President Hindenburg; from Germany he was to proceed to other State visits in Europe, arriving in England on an unofficial visit in the latter half of July. Mahmoud Pasha, his Prime Minister, was also to be in England when His Majesty arrived there. And I myself would be paying my usual summer visit to England in the same month.

In these circumstances it seemed improbable that any important action would be taken by the new Government in England until after the opportunity which was now presenting itself of making first-hand acquaintance with the views of so many of those principally concerned in directing the fortunes of Egypt. The Secretary of State, however, waited upon nothing before taking steps to ensure that I should no longer hold the office of High Commissioner. The circumstances of my departure from office caused some stir

in the political world at the time; and although I did not then and do not now dispute the full right of His Majesty's Government to choose the servant they think most suitable to their particular policy, I still feel it necessary to set down in detail a record of the event, so that the possibility of misunderstanding may be reduced to a minimum.

Let me recapitulate first of all the account of the incident given by Mr. Henderson, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons on July 26, 1929: "Within a few days of my going to the Foreign Office, a communication was received from Lord Lloyd.<sup>1</sup> I read that communication and was very much struck by the language, and what I believed to be the spirit which underlay it. I at once asked for papers to be handed to me going back to the greater part of the time during which Lord Lloyd had been High Commissioner, and I must say I could not but be impressed with the very wide divergence of view that was manifested in those papers—divergence of view between the position taken up by my predecessor in office and Lord Lloyd." Mr. Henderson then gave four instances of the alleged divergence, to which I shall make further reference later. He then went on: "I ought to say that, during the early part of this year, things became so bad that the conduct of business became difficult, since on few, if any, points was Lord Lloyd able to accept the views of my predecessor, and vice versa. An examination of the papers clearly demonstrated that the policy of my predecessor was a minimum of interference in the internal affairs of Egypt . . . and a liberal interpretation of the Declaration of 1922.

<sup>1</sup> This communication was a despatch from myself to Sir A. Chamberlain, which will be found printed in full at the end of this chapter.

“What was Lord Lloyd’s attitude to this? In numerous instances he is clearly out of sympathy with both these objects I have stated. . . . I was faced with this dilemma. Could we contemplate a perpetuation of this stream of dissatisfaction, a stream of which it could be said normally it was restless, very frequently it was turbulent, never smooth, and never clear. Could we contemplate going forward with the policy that we hoped eventually to submit to the House with any degree of confidence if this marked determination to misinterpret or ungenerously to apply, that characterised the views of the High Commissioner during the last few years, had to be continued? . . . I came to the conclusion that the best thing I could do was to intimate to Lord Lloyd that we were dissatisfied with the position that had obtained during three or four years. I made an ‘intimation’ to Lord Lloyd to the following effect. ‘In the short time at my disposal since taking office, I have endeavoured to review in their broad outlines the sequence of political events in Egypt since 1924. To be quite candid I feel bound to tell you that I have been impressed by the divergence of outlook which has from time to time been apparent between my predecessor and your Lordship. That this difference of outlook was perfectly sincere I do not for a moment doubt, but I confess that it appears to me so wide as to be unbridgeable. The success of my policy, which will certainly not be less liberal than that of my predecessor, will depend on the extent to which it may be interpreted with understanding and sympathy by His Majesty’s representative. In the light of recent correspondence, I should be lacking in frankness did I not warn you that the possibility of your views being harmonised with those of either

“ ‘my predecessor or myself appears to me remote,  
“ ‘and in these circumstances I should like to discuss  
“ ‘the situation with you on your return.’ Lord Lloyd  
“ arrived in this country this day week (July 18th). I  
“ was prepared to give him an interview the following  
“ morning. He expressed a desire to see me on Tues-  
“ day morning. . . . I do not think it would have been  
“ possible for an interview to have ended more friendly  
“ than the interview between him and myself did on  
“ Tuesday last.”

These then were the very serious charges made against me, that I was the source of a constant “stream of dissatisfaction normally restless, very ‘frequently turbulent, never smooth, never clear’: that I had made the conduct of business difficult and exhibited a marked determination to misinterpret my instructions, or ungenerously to apply them. They have remained unanswered to this day, four years after they were made; and they are charges more damaging than have ever been publicly brought without examination against a servant of the Crown in any responsible position. I find no fault with the accusation that I was out of sympathy with a “liberal” interpretation of the 1922 Declaration. I believed that the ultimate and most important goal of British policy in Egypt was to arrive at a full and complete agreement with Egypt which would preserve her independence and safeguard our vital interests, and I also believed that in the existing state of political forces in Egypt such agreement could only be achieved by a rigid adherence on our part to the reservations made in 1922, reservations which remained the declared policy of Government and which embodied those vital responsibilities of which we could not divest ourselves. Nor again

did the accusation that I was "out of sympathy with "a policy of a minimum degree of intervention in "purely internal affairs in Egypt" concern me very nearly. The truth of that charge depended upon what was considered to be the minimum of intervention necessary to discharge our declared responsibilities. I did not ever wish to intervene, and had never suggested intervention, except to discharge those responsibilities, and I do not dispute the right of any Labour Government to conclude that I should be out of sympathy with their estimate of the minimum that was necessary for that purpose. Those two charges would have been quite sufficient justification for their desire to get rid of me. Had they said that they wished to negotiate a treaty upon terms more generous than were offered to Sarwat Pasha by their predecessors, and that they thought I was not the man to undertake such negotiations, I should have had no reason at all to quarrel with that view. But having such good justification in my political views for his action, why did Mr. Henderson go out of his way to make further accusations against my personal conduct—conduct not towards himself but towards Sir Austen Chamberlain—and why did he make these needless charges at a time when Sir Austen Chamberlain, the only person who had any right to make them, or who could possibly deny them, had suddenly left England and was to remain absent for a little while? These charges, moreover, were brought against me at second-hand, and when the only person except Mr. Baldwin who could answer them was absent. It is a fact well worthy of remark that the last three of my predecessors in Egypt had vacated their offices as a result of serious differences of opinion with Whitehall. Sir Reginald

Wingate had been superseded in his post, and so had Sir Henry Macmahon, while in Lord Allenby's case the differences which had led to his departure had been far more grave than any differences that I had had. I do not recall, however, that in any of these cases their personal conduct had been subsequently made the subject of a public arraignment. At this lapse of time, when the affair is a matter of history, and nothing has been said in regard to it for four years, I may perhaps be allowed to examine in detail the substance of the charges then brought. Later historians may find some interest in such an examination, recorded before the memory of the events concerned has become too stale, but not before it has recovered from the first shock of bewilderment and has had time to re-establish its balance.

Mr. Henderson, in fact, laid great emphasis on the friendly nature of my interview with him; and I can fully endorse the description. As I understood the situation when I talked to him on the Tuesday before the debate took place, his justification for seeking my resignation was his conclusion that I would be out of sympathy with the treaty policy he intended to follow. I think he would have been following a more expedient if not a more fruitful course if he had decided to find out for himself how far I should be prepared to carry out that policy. But in view of his telegram to me and of what he said personally, I realised that I had not the confidence of His Majesty's Government, and in such circumstances I clearly had no course but to resign. I did not understand from him that he would justify his part in the matter by anything more than a declaration that he concluded that I would be out of sympathy with the policy which he intended to pursue. I could not,



therefore, feel that I had any personal grievance at such a state of affairs or such a result.

What, then, was the reason why further charges were made against me, which in the circumstances of the case were not necessary? Mr. Henderson did, I think, seek indirectly to give a reason in his statement from which I have already quoted. After dwelling at some length upon the friendly nature and conclusion of his interview with me, he went on to say: "I think all went well until he had an interview with "the Right Honourable Gentleman the ex-Chancellor "of the Exchequer, and I do not know what the House "thinks of the change of attitude that has taken place. "There was a friendly exchange of notes [between Mr. "Henderson and myself]. Lord Lloyd on his own "admission saw the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, "and, I suppose, we had the result of it two days ago "at Question time, when I was asked, not in a very "friendly way, whether I had extorted the resignation "from Lord Lloyd."

The inference—the only inference—that could be drawn from these remarks was that having had a friendly interview with Mr. Henderson, and left him under the impression that I had no sense of personal grievance, I had then gone straight to Mr. Winston Churchill, given him a different view of the situation, and stirred him to fight on my behalf a battle which I had not the courage to fight for myself. I must leave it to my readers to decide whether it is a just view of Mr. Winston Churchill that he requires to be stimulated to battle or whether I myself am the kind of person who likes others to fight his battles for him. After all, the question that Mr. Churchill asked was not in itself very hostile: it was a supplementary question, based upon Mr. Henderson's

own answer to a previous question from another Member.

MR. HENDERSON: I had sent an intimation to Lord Lloyd before the latter left Egypt which was based upon my reading of the attitude he had adopted towards the policy of the late Government.

MR. CHURCHILL: Are we to understand from that answer that this resignation has been extorted—(Interruption.) I am asking for information—by the Government from Lord Lloyd, and that, if his resignation had not been forthcoming, dismissal would have followed?

HON. MEMBERS: Answer!

MR. HENDERSON: The telegram that I sent to Lord Lloyd was of such a character that I think most people would have accepted it as an invitation to terminate their position.

I wondered at the time and I still wonder very much what there could have been in that question—which he himself answered in the affirmative—to cause Mr. Henderson to conclude that I had acted dishonourably towards him, and to make serious charges against my conduct of my duties as High Commissioner. Did he really think that I had behaved so ill as to merit a treatment seldom accorded to public servants? It is difficult to believe so in view of his remark that he had nothing personally against me, and that we were on the friendliest terms. And yet, immediately before making that remark, he had accused me of conduct unbecoming in a public servant, and immediately afterwards he went on—without a pause—to accuse me indirectly of conduct hardly honourable in a private individual. The statement was bewildering: whatever the motive for it, I was left to face two very

serious charges, unable for obvious reasons to dispute them myself, and with my late chief, who alone could speak with authority on the matter, out of earshot.

For the curious thing about the personal charges which Mr. Henderson brought against my conduct as High Commissioner was that they were all charges regarding my relations not with the Cabinet or His Majesty's Government as a whole, but with his predecessor, my late chief, Sir Austen Chamberlain. He never stated that I had expressed a divergent view from the Cabinet, or that I had not loyally carried out the policy or the line of action which I had been instructed to carry out in cases where I had been overruled. He gave four main instances, and the first he chose was the problem as to whether Zaghlul in the summer of 1926 should be allowed to resume office. "My predecessor", he said, "was strongly in 'favour of non-intervention. After a lengthy tele-graphic dispute, Lord Lloyd's view was accepted by 'the Cabinet.'" Here there is no charge at all except that I refused to accept without discussion a policy with which I did not agree. The next instance given was the question of British officials in the Egyptian service, in which "Lord Lloyd wished to insist 'rigidly on the retention of a large proportion of 'British officials' . . . 'a very lengthy exchange of 'despatches resulted in Lord Lloyd being overruled". No charge was made that, when overruled, I had not loyally accepted the decision—it was simply alleged that, upon an important question, I had expressed my view even though it differed from that of the Secretary of State. The next instance given by Mr. Henderson was that of the "Army Crisis", in which again I was ultimately overruled. Every person who has held high office under the Crown knows well that it happens to

him in three or four years of office to find that his views upon three or four occasions will have conflicted with those of the Department concerned at home. Has any High Commissioner, or Viceroy, or Governor, found himself always in accord on every important question with the views of Whitehall, and never under the necessity of expressing a divergent view? In this history alone has it not been clear that on several important occasions the various incumbents of the Residency at Cairo expressed views entirely divergent from those held by the Secretary of State, when lengthy correspondence resulted in one or the other view being finally accepted. Anybody with any experience of the conduct of such offices knows that such divergencies of view are common form, and that to refer to them as if they were uncommon incidents gives an entirely incorrect impression.

The next and last instance given by Mr. Henderson was the case referred to at some length in the last chapter. Mr. Henderson's account of it was as follows: "In the early spring of this year the Egyptian Government sought the concurrence of my predecessor in the imposition of certain new taxes on British subjects in Egypt. Under the Capitulations these taxes could not be imposed without our consent. The taxes proposed were moderate and reasonable in themselves, and the Egyptians claim that they were fully justified on equitable grounds in imposing them was unanswerable. Lord Lloyd however strongly opposed any concession whatever in respect of most of them. After a telegraphic argument he was overruled." The reader will have been able to judge for himself how inaccurate is this picture of my attitude in this matter. I had been asked to express my

view in regard to four taxes, and in regard to one only of them had I entirely opposed any concession whatever: in regard to two I had not opposed the suggested concession at all, and in regard to the fourth I had suggested delay until the situation was clearer. It was simply untrue therefore to say that "in respect of most of them I had strongly opposed any concession whatever", and it was most unfortunate that Sir Austen Chamberlain was not in his place to give a true account of what had happened, and that circumstances seem to have deprived him of any later opportunity of stating the true facts.

Mr. Henderson was not content, however, with thus prejudicing my case at a time when Sir Austen was absent. He went further and alleged that in between these major disputes numerous minor differences revealed themselves, and he made the very serious and startling accusation that in the early part of 1929 things became so bad that the conduct of business became difficult owing to my divergence of view. The actual facts were that, apart from the tax question, the discussion of which occupied only a few days, during 1929 my despatches to the Secretary of State were almost entirely concerned with three main questions. The first was the arrangement of a practical settlement of the Nile water disposal, as to which no difference arose. Indeed at the conclusion of this correspondence, I received the following from the Secretary of State: "Your telegram of the 29th April. You are authorised to proceed forthwith to final exchange of notes. I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating you, the members of your staff, and the Sudan agent on the successful outcome of these prolonged negotiations". The second question was the Egyptian Government's

proposals in regard to a reorganisation of the Jurisdiction of the Courts; the last despatch which Sir Austen Chamberlain sent me on this subject stated that he had read my despatch upon the Egyptian Government's latest proposal and shared my view that it was not a proposal to be encouraged. The third question related to the attitude to be taken up by His Majesty's Government vis-à-vis the new Customs Tariff proposed by Egypt. The conclusion of this correspondence, which was as harmonious in tone as the others, was a despatch from Sir Austen Chamberlain dated May 29: "Your telegram of 28th May. The draft note enclosed in your despatch of 20th April is approved. You should inform the representatives of other foreign Powers of the attitude of His Majesty's Government in this matter." But unfortunately Sir Austen Chamberlain, the only person who could have stated these facts, was absent at the time and has apparently had no later opportunity of stating them.

The case regarding divergence of views did not, in fact, at any point substantiate the charge. It had therefore to be buttressed by an entirely inaccurate account of the comparatively unimportant case of the taxes, in which I had suggested a very modest qualification upon the full concession for which the Egyptian Government were asking. And the whole misleading statement had to be dragged in, in order to support the unnecessary allegation that my conduct of my office was marked by a determination "to misinterpret or ungenerously to apply" my instructions; a charge which was then further justified by the suggestion that I had played Mr. Henderson false by misrepresenting matters to Mr. Winston Churchill.

The reason for this sudden and unsubstantiated

attack lay, it has been suggested, in the fact that the Labour Government were in too great a hurry to make their mark in Egyptian affairs. They had begun negotiations for a treaty with the representatives of Egypt then in London. Although I was His Majesty's representative in Egypt they had concealed from me both the fact and the intention, because they knew—or if they did not know, the Foreign Office must very soon have informed them—that I should at once have warned them that they could not possibly get a treaty, at any rate a treaty of the kind which would preserve the interests we had laid down as essential. They had thus put themselves in a false position, and the only way they could extricate themselves was by forcing my resignation on some other issue. But the period since they took office had been too short for such an issue to arise and they were therefore obliged to seek their pretext in my relations with the previous Government. So originated Mr. Henderson's telegram of July 3, and my subsequent interview with him, after my return, on July 23. All so far went well, and my resignation was secured, but as it could not possibly be described as entirely voluntary on my part, some explanation of it had to be made public. Letters were therefore agreed upon between Mr. Henderson and myself and published. My letter ran as follows: "Since my return from Egypt I have been thinking over, in the light of my recent conversation with you, the situation caused by the advent of a new government in England, and the policy which I understand is to be pursued in regard to Egyptian affairs. I had had every hope and desire to continue to serve under the new administration, but I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that my views are not likely to be in sufficient harmony

“with yours as to enable me conscientiously to discharge my duty to His Majesty’s Government. I should be grateful, therefore, if you would submit my resignation to His Majesty.”

This letter was fully accepted by Mr. Henderson and in the most friendly spirit, but it proved subsequently to be inadequate for his purpose, for it did not obscure the fact—indeed it definitely suggested—that some change of policy was intended by the Labour Government. This change they contemplated, but did not at all desire to make public. So that when the notes were published and immediate demands were made, both in the Lords and the Commons, for an explanation, they sought escape in the unprecedented step of publicly arraigning—in his absence—my relations with the Secretary of State in the preceding Government.

In the Lords, Lord Salisbury raised at once the inevitable question: what was the intended change of policy which was clearly indicated by the public explanation of my resignation? Lord Parmoor on behalf of the Government at once began to endeavour to side-track this unpleasant issue, by referring to my relations with the ex-Secretary of State. At the outset of his reply he asked Lord Salisbury whether he had in mind the despatch sent from the Foreign Office by Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd on May 28. Lord Parmoor’s attempt was abortive and he had immediately to relinquish it and to suffer and evade as best he might some harassing questions as to policy. In the Commons next day Mr. Henderson was forewarned and forearmed. He began at once with a reference to the same despatch, and made it the text for a sweeping denunciation of my personal conduct and behaviour as High Commissioner. The despatch



in question has already been quoted in these pages:<sup>1</sup> It was at the request of Sir Austen Chamberlain that I had expressed my views; he had replied by rejecting them, and I hope that the history of the incident which I have given in the previous chapter will have convinced the reader that Mr. Henderson's account of it and of its importance was not in accord with the facts. Unfortunately, as I have previously stated, Sir Austen Chamberlain, who knew the facts, was absent at the time and apparently has had no subsequent opportunity of stating them.

I am sure that Mr. Henderson did not deliberately perpetrate the injustice inherent in the fact that these charges were made at a time when the only person who could speak with authority upon them was absent. Circumstances were too much for him. In order that his Government might be extricated from a difficulty, I had to be subjected to charges which could not be examined or rebutted.

The Members of the Conservative Cabinet who took part in the debates in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords were of course unable to deal with the charges so comprehensively launched against my conduct towards their colleague; they could only emphatically deny that there had ever been in the mind of the late Cabinet the slightest question of my loyalty or attention to duty. Lord Brentford, speaking in the name of the Cabinet in which he had served throughout, said in the House of Lords that it was the duty of the High Commissioner in all matters involving policy to make advices to the Home Government—advices, if necessary, in the shape of criticisms of any proposals that might be put before him. He went on: "I now desire to

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 293-6.

“state categorically on behalf of those of my colleagues who are here—and I am quite sure that I can say so on behalf of the late Government as a whole—that Lord Lloyd never disregarded any instructions sent to him by the Government, and that he had the fullest confidence of the Government up to the very end of our remaining in office”. Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons said: “Certainly nothing in the relationship of His Majesty’s late Government with Lord Lloyd gave us the slightest ground to complain of the loyalty and fidelity with which he carried out his duties”.

What was left therefore of the charges made? I had fully expressed my views of proposals made in regard to Egypt; and the late Government held that I had not only a right but a plain duty to do this. I had the full confidence of the late Cabinet, into whose minds no question had ever entered of my loyalty and fidelity.

What remained but the charge that I had been turbulent, ungenerous, and deliberately misinterpretive in regard to the views and instructions of my late chief. Sir Austen Chamberlain had never even suggested to his colleagues in the Cabinet that this was the case. How then had Mr. Henderson as Foreign Secretary, or Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister, become informed of it—at a time too when Sir Austen Chamberlain was absent? Did Mr. Henderson wish it to be understood that Sir Austen Chamberlain had disclosed to him, immediately upon his taking office, a grave state of affairs, which for months, if not for years, Sir Austen Chamberlain had been keeping strictly secret from his colleagues in his own party? And if that supposition is at once dismissed as unthinkable, from what source did Mr.

Henderson get the information upon which he based such serious charges? He stated that he drew his conclusion from a perusal of correspondence. But, even if from such an impersonal source he could draw any justifiable conclusions as to the official relations of the correspondents concerned, how did he bring himself to think that, in the absence of the only person who could authoritatively affirm or deny their truth, they warranted a public indictment?

I myself have studied very carefully and at length the whole of my correspondence with the Secretary of State. I cannot reproduce it for my readers; if I could I would very gladly submit it to their judgment. I am very ready to admit that I fought for what I believed to be the right policy with all the persistence I could summon, but nowhere in the correspondence can I find any evidence that I differed for the sake of differing, or for any reason except that I thought the matter under discussion to be of real importance, and the view I was advancing to be well grounded.

Unfortunately these conclusions, however carefully arrived at, must remain my own conclusions, and therefore open to the charge of a personal, if unconscious, bias. The best that can be done is to remind my readers that Mr. Henderson really based his charge upon one correspondence far more than any others, and out of that correspondence he singled out two despatches as his especial text. The first was my despatch giving my views in regard to the "tax proposals" which Mr. Henderson had so inaccurately described, and had made appear so formidable a divergence. The second was that which acknowledged receipt of the much-referred-to despatch of May 28; this communication of mine was according

to him the genesis of the whole incident, for he had been so much "struck by the language and what he believed to be the spirit that underlay it" that he asked for all my correspondence to be handed to him.

Although I cannot set out for the reader's perusal all that correspondence which Mr. Henderson so swiftly perused, reviewed, and reduced to conclusions, I can perhaps without being unduly wearisome quote those two so important despatches in full, and let the reader form his own conclusions.

*Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.*

I am sorry for any inconvenience which my delay in replying may have caused, but I feel that it would be shorter in the end to carry our commercial opinion with us as far as possible. I have therefore discussed the matter with Sir Bertrand Hornsby<sup>1</sup> and the presidents of the Alexandria and Cairo Chambers of Commerce.

The following are my observations:—

(a) *Ghaffir Tax.*

I agree. The Egyptian Government were informed in 1924 that this measure would be agreeable to us provided they could make satisfactory proposals for assessment.

(b) *Municipal Taxation.*

That the present and largely voluntary imposts to which the municipal authorities are compelled to resort for the raising of revenues they require are objectionable from every point of view, and both Egyptians and Europeans are agreed on this. Means of putting municipal taxation on a sounder basis are now being studied by the Egyptian Government, but my experience of municipal administration in India and elsewhere leaves me pessimistic as to the results.

Nevertheless, I recommend that you should reply to the effect that His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the

<sup>1</sup> Chairman of the National Bank of Egypt.

present unsatisfactory state of the municipal taxation and are in full sympathy with any attempt by the Egyptian Government to clear up the mess. I should be inclined not to go further than this even to giving a general expression of sympathy in the absence of any concrete proposals.

(c) *Petrol Tax.*

We are clearly in sympathy with the Egyptians in their desire to make users of the roads contribute to their upkeep. I feel, however, that a tax based on horse-power would be more favourable to British motor-car industry than a petrol tax. I hope, therefore, that if the Board of Trade confirm this impression you may find an opportunity of influencing Hafiz Afifi in favour of the former.

(d) *Stamp Duty.*

The ghaffir and the petrol tax are really only devised with a view to the recovering of payment for services rendered. The municipal tax is an attempt to improve the methods of raising funds already in existence. The stamp duty is in quite a different category, its object being to add to the existing sources of revenue. It has been shown in the enclosure to my despatch that the revenues are more than likely to be sufficient to balance expenditure for many years to come. There appears, therefore, no need to discuss this tax, and I would suggest that no expression of sympathy should be given.

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The second despatch of which the language and the spirit so struck Mr. Henderson ran as follows:—

*Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.*<sup>1</sup>

SIR

I have naturally read with great interest and attention despatch in which you summarise the principles by which policy in Egypt is to be regulated.

I may venture to offer a criticism of the main conclusion at which you arrive, viz., that intervention in the internal affairs of Egypt is to be confined to those cases where vital imperial

<sup>1</sup> See p. 293 *ante*.

interests are directly involved, it will, I think, be this: The Declaration of 1922 was, and still is, a unilateral act. It has never been accepted by Egypt, and even the friendliest Egyptian Government would not voluntarily consider accepting it to-day. If the abortive Sarwat treaty negotiations showed anything it was the difficulty at this date, when we have already given Egypt so much, of finding sufficient further concessions to make it worth her while to accept our minimum desiderata and thus to liquidate 1922. It has always seemed to me, and I must confess that in this respect your despatch has not altered my opinion, a most dangerous course to make further substantial concessions to Egypt, however reasonable in themselves, except as part of a general settlement involving Egypt's acceptance of our minimum requirements. By doing so, we cannot fail further to weaken what the Sarwat negotiations have already shown to be an essentially weak position for the conclusion of a settlement, and if we discard further negotiation assets it can only be in what I am personally convinced is ill-advised reliance on an Egyptian sense of gratitude, which has, to say the least, been consistently inconspicuous since 1922.

I have, etc.,

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LESSON REMAINS UNLEARNT

I HOPE that my readers will not regard as entirely inexcusable the parenthesis of the last chapter. I am aware that, in the manner it has been there dealt with, the subject is relevant far more to my personal history than to the history of Egypt. But the incident described had, of course, its importance in the story of our Egyptian policy, quite apart from my personal part in it: and I must now hasten to make amends for my digression by treating of it fully in its bearing on the main story.

In the debate in the House of Commons this aspect of the affair was unfortunately put very much in the background, owing in the main to Mr. Henderson's sweeping personal references. The debate had been opened by Mr. Baldwin, whose constant endeavour it is to lift Parliamentary discussion to the plane of general and not particular arguments. It was, no doubt, in pursuit of this excellent purpose that he refrained that day and has since consistently refrained from any reference to the good relations which had always existed between myself and the Cabinet of which he was Prime Minister. Mr. Henderson was animated by no similar purpose. He descended at once to the particular and, as a result, the debate was far less informative than the previous debate in the

House of Lords had been. In that House some very interesting information had been obtained by Lord Reading from Lord Parmoor—it was in effect that the Labour Government were not contemplating any change in policy, but a change in procedure which might be all-important. Lord Reading summarised the information he had received in these words: “We are told, first, that there is no change “of policy as regards the four reservations and the “Sudan; secondly, that there is no change of policy “in regard to internal questions. The third is that “the only change of policy may be in procedure, “which I quite agree may be important.” LORD PARMOOR: “All-important”.

In explanation of what this all-important change of procedure was, all that was vouchsafed from the Government benches was the following statement by Lord Parmoor: “There is in one sense a change of “procedure. I think that the late Government always “desired, as far as the internal policy of Egypt is concerned, after negotiation and arrangement, that it “should have as much as possible the constitution of a “self-governing community. I do not say about the “methods followed. In that respect we probably go “further. We have the same desire, but a different “way, no doubt, of proceeding.” Now this extremely cryptic phraseology was capable no doubt of several different interpretations. It might have meant that His Majesty’s Government intended intervention in Egyptian internal affairs for the restoration of Parliamentary Government. It might have meant that they intended to negotiate a treaty upon the basis of concessions more generous than the previous Government had contemplated. We need not, fortunately, consider the infinite series of meanings which it could



have carried, for history has shown us that what was actually intended was a combination of the two above recited. It was indeed admitted in both Houses of Parliament that negotiations—or conversations with a view to negotiations—had already commenced with the representatives of Egypt. And it was subsequently made clear that the Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were prepared to go very much further in concession than Mr. Baldwin's Government had gone, and that they also intended to intervene very directly in the internal affairs of Egypt by using these negotiations as a means to end the existing régime and restore Parliamentary Government.

This was a very definite change, and it was much more than a change in procedure. It constituted, beyond doubt, a marked alteration of policy. It will be recalled that since the Declaration of 1922 the one principle that had been steadily maintained had been no interference in Egyptian internal affairs except for the purpose of maintaining our essential interests as enshrined in the reserved points. It had never been suggested that we should intervene for any other purpose, and the suggestion would have been rejected as soon as made. The only instance which could possibly have been adduced as in any way remotely analogous was the indirect part which I myself had played in inducing Ziwar Pasha to restore Parliamentary Government in 1926. But the analogy would not bear inspection, for in that case the cessation of Parliamentary Government had itself been due to the direct intervention of His Majesty's Government, and the ultimate responsibility for the situation so created rested upon our shoulders. For the rest such divergences of view as there had been had concerned themselves solely with the interpre-

tation of our declared policy, and His Majesty's Government and the Residency had been entirely of one mind as to the importance of not intervening for any other cause save in defence of that policy. But now Mr. MacDonald's Government were proposing directly to interfere in support of one of the parties to a purely internal political struggle—a change of policy which could not be in any way linked to the Declaration of 1922.

The change of procedure was equally clearly defined, and, in the light of recent experience, clearly ill-advised. It was, of course, perfectly true that the Conservative Foreign Secretary had endeavoured to negotiate a treaty, and that the negotiation of such a treaty was a cardinal point of the policy laid down in 1922. But to begin negotiations again—and so soon—was to ignore every lesson that could be learnt from the previous attempt. The events described in many previous pages must have made it clear that even when Sir Austen Chamberlain began his negotiations with Sarwat Pasha the time could not be considered ripe for the achievement of a reasonable treaty. Sir Austen Chamberlain in his attempt to secure a treaty made what were admitted to be very considerable concessions to the Egyptian demands, but the Wafd remained completely unreasonable and unresponsive, rejected the proposed treaty out of hand, came into power as the result of that rejection, and proceeded to use that power in a manner which seriously undermined the relations between Great Britain and Egypt, and played havoc with the internal administration of that unfortunate country. Such respite from these calamities as she had since achieved had only come from the cessation of Parliamentary Government. The lesson, as far as His Majesty's

Government was concerned, was perfectly clear. It was set out by Sir Austen Chamberlain himself in a despatch dated March 13, 1928, and addressed to me in Cairo: "As regards the treaty, a most generous offer of settlement was made by His Majesty's Government, and the Prime Minister of Egypt saw in it a great opportunity for his country. It was refused, however, by his Government at the bidding of the Wafd, as he himself has explained. The Cabinet, nominally responsible for Egyptian policy, have rejected it on the ground that it does not provide for the complete withdrawal of the British troops in Egypt, because they have allowed their will to be imposed upon by people without responsibility. The late British Government (Socialist) refused to consider the complete withdrawal of British troops, and no British Government will or can accept such a condition. The treaty stands as the high-water mark of British concession to Egyptian nationality and it may be well for patriotic Egyptians to be left to ponder on the generosity of its terms and the character of its reception by the Egyptian Parliamentary majority."

Moreover, Sir Austen Chamberlain was not alone in drawing these conclusions. At the same period more than one of the responsible officials in the Foreign Office were busy placing upon record the conclusions to which a consideration of the negotiations inevitably led them. These records were of peculiar interest to me, for they showed me very clearly that whatever differences there had been in the past, the opinion of the permanent officials was now at one with my own. It seemed unfortunate that Mr. Henderson in his search through the papers had not lit upon these various statements of the un-

wisdom of the course he contemplated. Had he, for instance, been apprised of this considered opinion held by one of his senior advisers? "The recent negotiations, no less than earlier ones, have shown that a "reasonable compromise between British interests and "Egyptian aspirations will not on its merits alone be "accepted by Egyptian opinion." The writer goes on to infer that one of the few circumstances which can bring about such acceptance would be that the Wafd should be discredited. "The prestige and credit of "the Wafd will depend largely upon our handling of "the political situation while the present Government "(that of Mahmoud Pasha) remain in office."

Even more significant are the reflections recorded by another official who had been most active in impelling Sarwat Pasha to negotiate. In an interview which he gave to an Egyptian representative in the summer of 1928, he made up for a defective memory by a firmness of language and a soundness of judgment which did him credit.<sup>1</sup> "It had been the consistent policy of His Majesty's Government not from "their side to make any offer to Egypt. . . . Sir "Austen Chamberlain had adopted the same line of "conduct. Beyond impressing upon Sarwat Pasha that "he could not see what Egyptian interest could be "served by allowing the present unsatisfactory state of "affairs to continue, he had nothing specific to suggest. This conversation had resulted in Sarwat Pasha's "putting forward his first draft. Any departure from "such policy would give the impression that it was we "who were anxious for an agreement . . . it was desirable to leave the Egyptians under no delusion that "it was their interest in the first place that such an "agreement should be arrived at."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 228 *ante*.

All these admirable lessons were now to be discarded as soon as learnt. The rising tide of concession to Egypt was in a very short space of time to wash away all traces of "the high-water mark" left by the Chamberlain-Sarwat Treaty. The Wafd, in the loss of whose prestige and credit lay the only hope of a reasonable compromise being accepted, were to be restored not only to prestige but to power by the direct intervention of His Majesty's Government. And all this was to be done in a manner so hasty and impatient that it could not fail to give to Egypt and to the world the impression that Great Britain was desperately anxious to secure a treaty at all costs, whatever concessions might be involved. And at the last, the history which Mr. Henderson and his colleagues were determined so completely to disregard repeated itself inexorably. The negotiations broke down, just as previous negotiations had broken down, in face of the utter unreasonableness of the Wafd: the political career of Mahmoud Pasha, the moderate statesman to whom the negotiations owed their inception, was brought to an end, just as that of Sarwat Pasha had been brought to an end: once again the Wafd was left in possession of the field, and once again the only salvation that could be found for Egypt was in the termination of the Parliamentary régime.

There is the authority of the then Secretary of State for Air—the late Lord Thomson—for stating that these negotiations were begun—or that "conversations" were commenced when Mahmoud Pasha visited London in June. "The Prime Minister of Egypt was over here in June, and he saw, quite naturally and properly, the Foreign Secretary, and

“the Foreign Secretary discussed quite inevitably “Egyptian questions with him, and was so impressed “by the reasonable character of the proposals of “Mahmoud Pasha, the then Prime Minister, that he “requested the permission of the Cabinet to carry on “negotiations.” It was indeed more than curious that I as His Majesty’s representative in Egypt was at no time informed of these conversations, or of their result. But what was much more important from the point of view of Egypt was that although these negotiations were begun and carried well forward with Mahmoud Pasha, it was made a condition of their final conclusion that they must be, while still only in the stage of proposals, submitted to the Egyptian Parliament. This meant in effect that Mahmoud Pasha must resign, and the Parliamentary régime be restored. At the elections which must be held for this purpose it was inevitable that the Wafd would be restored to power, and that the real negotiations would take place with them. However reasonable, therefore, Mahmoud Pasha’s proposals might be, they were not, and under the proposed procedure could not be, the proposals which would have in practice to be considered. The Socialist Government was in fact disclosing its whole hand—giving away all its bargaining counters—before the real negotiations even began. The only result of telling Mahmoud Pasha what he could secure by way of concession was to impose upon his political opponents—the Wafd—the absolute necessity of securing more concessions still, or of refusing to sign a treaty. The procedure adopted was indeed certain automatically to defeat its own object. It was, as Lord Parmoor had said, “all-important”—and all-destructive in its ineptitude.

By the autumn of 1929 matters had been carried so far that a White Paper was published under the title of "Exchange of Notes relating to Proposals for an "Anglo-Egyptian Settlement". The whole of Egypt now knew the concessions that Mahmoud Pasha had already secured, and the proposals were therefore, by the very fact of their publication, foredoomed to failure. But worse still was to follow. It was quite true that the White Paper began with a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Prime Minister of Egypt which stated: "The accompanying proposals, "together with the explanatory notes to be exchanged "on matters of detail, which Your Excellency is about "to submit to the Egyptian Parliament, represent the "extreme limit to which I could recommend His "Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of "Great Britain and Northern Ireland to go in their "desire to achieve a lasting and honourable settlement "of outstanding questions between Great Britain and "Egypt". But that declaration of firm intentions had just as little effect in Egypt as other previous declarations of a similar character. The previous ones had been a bluff, and Egyptians had little doubt that this would prove to be the same. Had they not been told, only a year before, that the Chamberlain-Sarwat Treaty was "the high-water mark of British concessions", and yet within a few months far greater concessions were being offered, not in the course of any final negotiation, but as a sort of ground bait before decisive negotiations had even started? The statement might have been of some effect had there been any justification in past history for believing it.

But what little chance there had been for such credulity was very soon swept away by Labour and Liberal speeches when the proposals set out in the

White Paper came to be debated. The fact may be easily illustrated by a glance at the debate which took place in the House of Lords on December 11. The speech which was regarded as the most impressive, and was taken by the Government benches to be a convincing vindication of their policy, was that made by the late Lord Grey of Fallodon. His whole thesis was that the independence of Egypt must be the cardinal aim of our policy, and that all other considerations must be subordinated to this. At the very outset of his speech he said: "... The most important point of the Declaration of 1922 . . . was that Egypt was for the first time "in its history recognised as a sovereign independent "State, and whatever we may say about reservations, we "must regard that statement that Egypt is henceforth "an independent sovereign State as the governing "factor in all our negotiations". The vital and, in my judgment, the fatal point about this statement was that it exactly affirmed the Egyptian argument against which all attempts at negotiating a settlement had shipwrecked. All along they had met us with the flat assertion that we had recognised Egypt's independence, and that therefore we had no right to demand any conditions which infringed that independence. That was the deadlock, and it could never be removed until we had got Egyptians to understand that their statement was simply not true. In point of fact, the Declaration of 1922 had not given Egypt complete independence; it had given her a qualified independence, an independence which was subjected to certain definite reservations. If these reservations had not been expressly made, no Government and no party in Great Britain would have agreed to the 1922 Declaration. They were an absolutely vital part of that Declaration—just as important and just as sacrosanct



as the recognition of independence. Let us look at Lord Milner's Report: "The moment is favourable "for placing the relations of Great Britain and Egypt "on the satisfactory and enduring basis of a Treaty "which will *at one and the same time* establish the "independence of Egypt and secure the interests of "Great Britain". Let us look at the Declaration itself: "Whereas His Majesty's Government, in accord- "ance with their declared intentions, desire forth- "with to recognise Egypt as a sovereign state: *and* "*whereas the relations between His Majesty's Govern- "ment and Egypt are of vital interest to the British "Empire*".

So essential were the reservations regarded as being, that British troops were to remain in Egypt, British advisers were to be maintained in the Egyptian administration, and capitulatory privileges were to run as before, until agreement could be reached on the reserved points. Three attempts had already been made to reach such agreement: all had failed because the Egyptians refused to recognise the essential interests of Great Britain, and tried every proposal by the sole criterion of complete independence. And here, at the moment when a fourth attempt was to be made, was Lord Grey, with all the weight of his great name and reputation, asserting that the Egyptian standpoint was right and just, and giving them direct encouragement to persist in it. Nothing was better calculated to defeat the very end which he professed to desire. For four years in Egypt I had been strenuously endeavouring to bring to fruition the policy of the Declaration of 1922. I had made that policy the final test of every proposal, and some years' of close study of the facts had convinced me that the only hope of achieving the goal of that policy lay in

ourselves maintaining the declaration fully and firmly, and so compelling Egyptians to realise that they must recognise it too. In the speech which I made in the House of Lords before Lord Grey spoke I had endeavoured to make this clear: all my criticisms of the Government's proposals had one basis and one only—that they did not consist with or did not advance the Declaration of 1922. I fear that my speech must have been very ill-delivered, for this is how Lord Grey summed up: "To-night we have had put before us "two broad policies. One is the policy of the noble "Lord, Lord Lloyd, who made a speech which is precisely the sort of speech I should have endeavoured "to make if I had been defending the Cromer régime "in Egypt. If that speech is to be carried out to its "consequences, it means reverting to that sort of "work in Egypt . . . on the other hand there is the "policy of following out the developments of the "Declaration of 1922."

In fact, the policy of the Government and the speech of Lord Grey began by failing to comprehend the real meaning of the Declaration of 1922, went on to disregard as completely as if they had never occurred the history of the past seven years and the three utterly unsuccessful attempts that had already been made to secure a settlement, and finished by entirely misinterpreting or else by omitting all reference to what had actually been achieved. Lord Grey, for instance, referred at some length to the question of the use of the Nile waters, and was at pains to indicate the sort of arrangement that he thought ought to be come to in the future. He was, it surprisingly appeared, completely unaware that an arrangement, such as he was now urging the Government at some length to make, had already been concluded after long

and difficult negotiations; and indeed he admitted to me afterwards that he had never heard that such a settlement had even been attempted. He was estimating and pondering upon the policy I had followed not only, upon his own admission, in complete ignorance of important events which had recently taken place in Egypt, but also under a complete misapprehension as to the very nature of the policy itself.

Granted these false assumptions, Lord Grey's point of view was competently logical, and supported by arguments well suited to convince. There appeared at first sight a great deal to be said in favour of the simple policy of giving Egypt complete independence, while retaining the Sudan administration entirely in our own hands and providing adequately for the defence of the Suez Canal. What I was intent upon pointing out was the practical difficulty, for instance, of providing for the effective defence of the Canal and, at the same time, of giving Egypt complete independence. Quite apart from the fact that Lord Grey had completely overlooked a number of critical questions still awaiting solution, such as, to mention only one, the defence of foreign interests, he also seemed blandly unaware of any difficulty in this particular problem, or of the necessity of framing our tactics accordingly. His attitude and that of the Labour Party was in fact that to foresee difficulties was tantamount to opposing the policy. The only way to promote the policy was to forget past experience and to turn a blind eye upon all possibilities of failure!

One paragraph in Lord Grey's speech seemed in particular to illustrate this attitude very clearly, and the grave dangers inherent in it. "I would most earnestly deprecate", he said, "any analogy between India and Egypt. It is a most dangerous thing, and

“coming from the noble Lord (Lord Lloyd) who has  
“been in both places, and whose words carry weight in  
“both places, it is most dangerous. Egypt has never  
“been part of the British Empire. It was independent—  
“I was going to say self-governing, but governed under  
“its own King, before we went there. The whole  
“history of India has been entirely different, and I  
“think it most wrong and unwise politically to admit  
“that there is any parallel between what we have done  
“and may do in Egypt, and our position in India. It is  
“most dangerous to mix up the two things, and I  
“should not admit for a moment the argument that  
“because we have made a declaration about Egypt it  
“has any bearing upon our policy in India.”

The speaker could of course have been challenged as to his assumptions—and in one case out of his own mouth—for he had just previously stated that, owing to the suzerainty of Turkey, Egypt had never been independent till 1922 and he had also admitted that during the years of the Protectorate it could have been maintained that Egypt was part of the British Empire. But that controversy had no importance beside the practical facts of the situation. To talk of the danger and unwisdom of drawing any analogy between India and Egypt was simply to bury one's head in the sand. However careful British statesmen might be to draw no analogies, the dangerous comparison had long ago been drawn, and long ago acted upon by all those who were actually taking part in the politics of Egypt and India. In the minds of Egyptian and Indian spokesmen, the situation of both countries was practically identical—both desired independence, both were refused the full gift they desired because of the overriding presence of Great Britain, both claimed that they had received

recent promises of independence, and both asserted that they would consider no other proposal until those promises were implemented. In face of this fundamental identity, it became simply a pleasant academic exercise to talk of points of difference—it was like arguing in a cloud-burst about the difference between an umbrella and a parasol. Lord Grey's point was valid, for a debating society—though even there, not unanswerable—but it had no connexion at all with the actual facts of the situation that had to be met. Unfortunately it had a considerable, indeed almost a decisive, effect upon the important debate on Egyptian affairs in the course of which it was delivered.

Although it might be argued with all the force of logic that we had never had a regular position in Egypt, and that in India we had a legally indisputable right to remain; in sober reality our position in both countries was conditioned not by legalities, but simply by our will and our capacity to insist that the interests which we looked upon as vital should be fully regarded. The policy of 1922 was an attempt to reconcile the independence of Egypt with a due regard for the vital interests of Great Britain and the Empire. The policy of Egyptians was to assert that the independence of Egypt must come first, and that the interests of the Empire could be safely left at the mercy of an independent Egypt. The experience of the last seven years had been a constant repetition of the lesson that the policy of 1922 could not be carried out until Egypt had realised the inevitable necessity of paying as much regard to our vital interests as to her own independence. For four years I had been endeavouring to the best of my ability to follow a line of action which would ensure this real-

isation, and so allow the policy of 1922 to be consummated. And now the Socialist Government, with the powerful blessing of the Liberal Party, were intending to undo anything that might have been achieved to this end, and to confirm Egyptian politicians in their belief that they had only to remain unreasonable a little longer and the policy of 1922 would be finally surrendered.

The proposals now to be put forward will be found summarised in an appendix to this volume. They are there set out side by side with the proposals of 1921, 1924, 1927, so that the reader may trace with ease and rapidity the path of the British retreat. It will be sufficient, therefore, to say here that they contemplated the removal of British troops from Cairo and Alexandria to the deserts east of longitude 32°, the withdrawal of British officers from the Egyptian Army, and the suppression of the European Department in the Ministry of the Interior. These proposals meant in effect the disappearance of our effective power to protect foreign residents. Having surrendered that power, the proposals undertook that for our part we would use all our influence to secure the abolition of the Capitulations. The only counterweight was a clause in the draft whereby the King of Egypt recognised his obligation to defend the lives and property of foreigners in Egypt and specifically undertook to carry it out. All these proposals were perfectly consistent with the sovereign independence of Egypt, but entirely inconsistent with the Declaration of 1922. They were clearly based upon the latter part of the now famous advice of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt: "Govern—or Go". The argument ran that since the Declaration of 1922 we had debarred ourselves from governing, and therefore there

was only one course open to us—to go. And the sooner we stopped shuffling uneasily, hat in hand in the doorway, the better it would be for everybody concerned. It was pointed out in addition that we could very easily provide for the security of our Imperial interests by garrisoning the Canal, and telling Egypt that the administration of the Sudan was no concern of hers. The argument had the attractiveness of simplicity, but the actual situation was not in fact by any means so simple. It meant, of course, a complete change from the policy underlying the Declaration of 1922. But apart from that it assumed as beyond doubt that conditions of internal peace were now assured in Egypt, and this assumption could not unfortunately be justified upon any evidence. No one could, for instance, doubt that there was a very strong antagonism between the sovereign on the one hand and the popular or extreme political party on the other. Only so recently as 1926–27 the Wafd had been busy organising measures designed to suborn the allegiance of the Army. In 1928 there had been a counter-stroke which had suspended the Constitution. The situation was precarious, and the chief motives for restraint on either side were, first, the presence of the British element in the Egyptian Army and administration, and then—in the last resort—of British troops. But if these restraining forces were withdrawn, what justification was there for supposing that the two parties would not contend by violent measures for mastery? And if such internecine strife did break out, with the almost certain corollary of widespread loss of foreign lives and property, what would then be the position of Egypt? It would be impossible for Great Britain, having herself surrendered the means of protecting foreign lives and property, to insist that other Powers should not

take such measures as they thought necessary to intervene on behalf of their own subjects. We could not say to Italy, for instance: "We cannot protect Italian "residents in Egypt and you shall not". And if once a foreign Power was provoked to send a force to Egypt, what complications might not be involved, not only to the position of our troops on the Canal, but to the economic life of the Sudan?

It was, in fact, essential that, as Sarwat Pasha himself had maintained, Egypt should recognise "that British interests require that the procedure "adopted should be a prudent one, and that a beginning should therefore be made with measures of precaution which will be progressively relaxed until they "disappear, leaving in their place a spirit of proved "confidence". There was no necessity for the brutal antithesis of "govern or go", no necessity to conclude that because our policy was difficult of achievement, achievement was therefore impossible. With a truer perspective, with patience and industry, and with a steady regard for the facts, a solution of our difficulties was possible. It was only a superficial or prejudiced survey, or else a tired mind, that would conclude that no other course was now possible to us but to cut our losses and go home.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE SUDAN : 1925 ONWARDS

THE Annual Report upon the administration of the Sudan for the year 1925 opens with the following words: "The year will always be one memorable in the "history of the Sudan for the completion of the "Sennar Dam and the canalization of 300,000 feddans "of the Gezira plain. This great work which in July "brought water by gravitation for the cultivation of "areas hitherto dependent on the vagaries of rainfall "removes a formidable obstacle from the path of "economic development and marks the beginning of "a new era."

The Gezira scheme was able indeed in its early years to show very gratifying financial results which had a marked effect upon the figures of the Sudan budget. But the Government were prudently alive to the fact that such a source of revenue must be liable to violent fluctuations and their wisdom was to be fully, if unfortunately, justified by the slump in the prices of primary products which before long was to overtake the whole world.

The following table taken from the administration report for the year 1927 is interesting as showing the effect upon Government finance of the large development schemes undertaken since the War: especially when it is remembered that a large proportion of the

Gezira receipts were not credited to revenue, but were set aside to form an equalisation fund against bad years.

|                                    | 1925      | 1926      | 1927      |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Normal administrative revenue      | 2,289,609 | 2,153,764 | 2,159,848 |
| Government commercial undertakings | 105,124   | 135,014   | 117,933   |
| Railways and steamers .            | 1,909,650 | 2,115,999 | 2,180,753 |
| Egyptian contribution .            | 562,500   | 750,000   | 750,000   |
| Gezira revenue . .                 | ..        | 703,212   | 721,411   |
|                                    | 4,866,883 | 5,857,989 | 5,929,945 |

Meanwhile the Kassala project had been meeting with exceptional difficulties, which had to be solved in 1927 by the resumption of the concession originally granted to the Kassala Cotton Company in the Gash delta in exchange for a new concession in the Gezira, and it was still uncertain whether a substantial and regular revenue could be depended upon to result from the Government's operations in the concession now resumed. But it could not be charged against the Government that they had been improvident in their forecasts, or incautious in their contemporary policy: and the general plan of economic development was proceeding gradually but steadily and without serious set-back.

One very great advantage of the cautious pace of progress was that time was given to fit the economic developments smoothly into existing social and administrative schemes. The native of the Sudan cultivates land which is his own property, and this fact is one of the foundations upon which the social and administrative institutions of the country are built. The Gezira scheme altered nothing from this point

of view: it brought with it no revolutionary changes. With the aid of scientific methods it improved native cultivation and production "without hindrance to or "alteration of the normal social development of the "community". When on January 21, 1926, I had the privilege of performing the opening ceremony of the Sennar Dam, I made special reference to this important aspect of the scheme in the following words: "I desire "finally to touch upon another important considera- "tion of a more general character. The ties between "the Government and the peoples of the Sudan have "always been those of personal friendship, and it is "a first principle of the Gezira scheme, as it will be "of any similar projects which may be undertaken in "this country, that so desirable a relationship should "be sedulously preserved. The development of the "people along their own natural lines is, the Govern- "ment believes, essential; and organized improve- "ment of material conditions will not be allowed to "result in the loss or debasement of the traditional "ideas which form the basis of the character of the "people. I look confidently to the leaders of thought "in the Sudan, whether religious notables, tribal "chiefs or men of special education, to play their part "in maintaining for the future the happy conditions "which exist to-day in this respect."

The policy of leaving administration as far as possible in the hands of native authorities, and of guiding these authorities so that traditional usage might be assimilated to the requirements of equity and good government, has already been described in the previous chapter. It has been criticised by some experienced authorities on the ground that it was commenced too late. These authorities contend that during its early years the administration was too much

obsessed by the fear of Mahdiism and in consequence paid too much regard to the necessity of winning over religious as opposed to secular local authority. The contention may very likely be substantial, but the mistake has since the War been rectified as far as possible. Now, at any rate, the policy stands as a logical attempt to apply the theory of "indirect rule" which has inspired so much of our African colonial administration. There is as yet no reliable evidence for concluding that the policy, cautiously applied, does not offer the best means of development towards self-government that has yet been evolved. It certainly appears to possess very great advantages over the theory which held the field in the days when policy was being formulated for our earlier-acquired Asiatic dependencies. But while the latter has reached a much more advanced stage, the African experiments are still young and still have most of their political difficulties ahead of them. Of them all, the Sudan is likely to be in the long run the most difficult as well as the most interesting. It will have to deal with races differing widely in origin, in language, and in the stages of their civilisation. Although the south is still a part of darkest Africa, the north has communications, which may increase and grow closer, with the Mediterranean sea-board and so with the tendencies of Europe and the West.

It is, for instance, a much-travelled airway, and as air transport develops it is inevitable that the Sudan will become a through route for a constant stream of air-borne traffic. Already it has had to resist strenuous arguments urging the employment of the air-arm as its chief medium of pacification and defence. It has been suggested that the Air Force can do all the work of ground forces much more efficiently and can

be linked up into intimate connection with the work of the civil administration, but, so far, projects of this nature have been resisted. The value of the work that can be done by the Air Force in a country like the Sudan is very high indeed, but it must not be over-estimated, and, when all has been said in its favour, it must remain auxiliary to the ground forces.

The Governor-General of the Sudan put the case well in a despatch which I had the duty of forwarding to the Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup> He described the true use of the Air Force as follows:

“If we have an efficient Air Force at Khartum and  
“a well spread ground organization for them, we have  
“reason to believe (a) that Mahdiism, that potent but  
“latent menace, will never be able to sweep us from  
“the West. Its concentrations will be broken and  
“scattered in mid-career at the further outposts.  
“There will be no disasters like those of Hicks Pasha  
“and Baker Pasha in the eighties; no siege of Khar-  
“tum. The eyes and the weapons of the Air Force  
“would render impossible any repetitions of those  
“tidal onslaughts of hordes of fanatics. The internal  
“defence problems of the Sudan become simple:  
“(b) that the petty municipal intelligentsia of Khar-  
“tum, Omdurman and other lesser cities, who have  
“lent an ear in the past to the sedition mongers of  
“Egypt, have wit enough to see what the Air Force  
“can achieve. By impressing this class of mind the  
“Air Force does much of its best work and stabilises  
“the political situation: (c) that remote garrisons of  
“the Sudan Defence Force are linked up efficiently  
“with headquarters and the outside world by this  
“swift power of communication, and that the risk of  
“mutinous tendencies in the native ranks is mini-

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain, July 6, 1928.

“mised: (*d*) that in all cases of grave emergency the “Air Force supplies means of rapid communication “and investigation, enabling early steps to be taken.” He went on to point out that the problem of the civil administration in the semi-savage areas was a difficult and complicated one, calling for very careful, deliberate, and tactful handling. When trouble arose, it was essential that it should be dealt with on the ground by a careful exploratory advance conducted with a view to make touch with the disaffected and establish understanding, so that good relations might be instituted from the first. In view of the importance of this consideration, it was essential, he urged, that authority should be selective in its targets and should use infantry for its ground contacts.

He was able to illustrate his contentions very tellingly from actual and recent experience. The Air Squadron, which had recently as a trial measure been stationed at Khartum, had, almost immediately after its arrival, been ordered to take part in two different operations, both very typical of the kind of work that was so likely to devolve upon the administration of the Sudan. In the Upper Nile Province a witch-doctor of the Lau Nuer, named Gwek Wonding, had adopted during the previous year a hostile attitude and had for a considerable period openly defied the Government. There was danger of the trouble spreading through his tribe, and as the efforts of the District Commissioner to get in touch with Gwek by peaceful means had proved unavailing, it was decided that military action must be taken. On December 13, 1927, it was reported that the followers of the rebellious witch-doctor numbered 4000 and that certain hostile bodies were in the immediate neighbourhood of a village called Nyerol, where the main Govern-

ment force was established on December 15. The Royal Air Force made several preliminary flights by way of demonstration and warning and then carried out a series of bombing attacks upon hostile concentrations, which had the result of breaking up the organised resistance. In the view of the Governor-General the Squadron had carried out the work demanded of it with the highest degree of efficiency and mobility, but the lessons to be drawn from the action still remained the broad lessons outlined in the quotation given above. It was doubtful whether any direct immediate results had been obtained from the Air Force co-operation, but the moral effect was undeniable and was bound to prove a valuable factor in the further handling of the disaffected area. The second operation in which the newly arrived squadron had been called upon to take part was also directed against a section of the Nuers, by whom, at the instigation of one of their chiefs, the District Commissioner, Captain Fergusson, had been murdered. The murder had led to a general rising among the surrounding sections of the tribe, although it was probably in no way intended as a signal for such a rising but simply as a means of removing an officer who, owing to his knowledge, was likely to be a source of trouble to the chief concerned. Retirement into the swamps of their native territory was counted upon by the rebellious tribesmen as a complete check-mate to punitive action by the Government troops. The activities of the Royal Air Force, therefore, came upon them as a complete and very unpleasant surprise. The ground forces held them and their herds encircled in a cordon while the aeroplanes bombed, and the effect of two or three days of this treatment was the complete breaking of their warlike spirit, and

a clear realisation that the damage done to their cattle was a retribution for their own folly. It was due to the co-operation of the Air Force that the retribution meted out in this case was swift and effective. But, as the Governor-General pointed out, the planes had a general target of hostile tribesmen who had been hunted by the infantry into marshy lands, where these concentrations would have been otherwise inaccessible. "Not only was it a clear target: it was a "target composed of tribal elements in the bombing "of which there was no ground for compunction. It "was necessary to punish swiftly and severely those "tribal elements which had complicity in or sympathy "with the murder of a British officer."

The lesson to be learnt from these two operations was clear enough and seemed undoubtedly to reinforce the general conclusions laid down above. In the operations consequent upon the murder of Captain Ferguson, retribution was the goal, but even so the Air Force could not have acted successfully except as auxiliary to the ground forces. Moreover, the general character of future operations was much more likely to resemble that of the action against Gwek Wonding, the witch-doctor, and in that case the prime necessity was for establishing pedestrian contact and understanding, and it was important that the innocent should not suffer with the guilty. Here there could have been no doubt that the Air Force could not have contributed to a salutary permanent result, except in a definitely auxiliary capacity and as reinforcing the pacifying authority by the moral effect of an impression of power.

Apart from the lessons to be learnt in regard to the employment of the Air Arm, the conclusion to be drawn from these operations was summed up as



follows by the Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal, the province concerned: "There can be no question that the "policy and methods of native administration as "followed in this province have successfully stood the "severest test to which they could be put. The stead- "fastness of the loyal sections during this rising "clearly shows the measure of control that has been "established. The great benefit reaped in the present "instance was the support of these loyal sections, "which not only confined the trouble, but by narrow- "ing the area of actual operations, enabled the rebels "to be swiftly dealt with. The future depends on a "continuance of the administration on the same "lines."

This conclusion was sound enough in regard to the still backward areas of the Southern Sudan, where there were some tribes which had hardly as yet come under effective administration, and others which were still sunk in ignorance and superstition although gradually becoming amenable to the discipline of civilised authority. But these areas differed by a vast measure from the more civilised territory centring upon Khartum and Omdurman, where Egyptian seditious propaganda had already succeeded in planting a seed which had germinated in 1924 sufficiently to give a warning of what the future might bring forth. And meanwhile Mahdism, though a latent, was still a powerful force, which in view of the fanatical temperament of the population of the Western Sudan, had still to be seriously reckoned with. The son of Mohamed Ahmed el Mahdi of 1881 was still living at Omdurman, still held in veneration as the true Messiah by some of his more fanatical adherents from Darfur and Kordofan, still respected as the son of his mighty father by more moderate

elements. The Government had pursued towards him what might unkindly have been described as an opportunist policy: while he himself professed a loyalty latterly somewhat bewildered, and made the most of the marks of favour which authority from time to time bestowed upon him. The situation was, therefore, one of infinite variety, containing elements of potential danger from widely differing sources, but upon the whole politically not unsatisfactory.

The economic position was considerably more speculative than the political. It depended entirely upon climatic conditions and almost entirely upon the production of two commodities—cotton and gum—the prices of which were and are liable to violent fluctuations, and which are produced in concentrated areas. The greater part of the country was therefore being administered at a loss, and was dependent upon surplus revenues being provided from the comparatively small favoured areas. It was still essential, therefore, that every effort should be made to extend the basis of the country's economic structure by developing transport and other facilities in the unproductive areas. This was bound to be a slow process, and it was only safe to pay for it out of current resources and not by piling up a load of debt. Among the grave dangers which the Treasury had to fear and prepare against was a prolonged continuance of low cotton prices—a danger which was very shortly to materialise. Apart from the possibilities of danger inherent in the normal financial position of the Sudan, there were important administrative tasks which called urgently to be undertaken. It was imperative that as soon as possible military charges should be met from the country's own revenue: that substantial reductions should be made in taxation and in the

scale of railway charges. Until this could be done there was always the possibility that discontent might be engendered and there was always the certainty that private enterprise, particularly in the southern provinces, was not being provided with the freest opportunities for development. The consequent lack of attraction to private enterprise entailed upon Government the task of undertaking new developments together with the financial risks involved, and so added to the speculative nature of the economic position.

Such, within broad limits, was the position of the Sudan at the time when I was holding the office of High Commissioner at Cairo. The succession of Egyptian political problems which succeeded one another with such bewildering rapidity prevented me, much to my disappointment, from acquainting myself as closely as I should have liked with the day-to-day conditions in which the work of the administration was being carried on. None the less I had paid a visit to the Sudan in the first year of my tenure of office, and was able again to make a tour of inspection in 1929, leaving Cairo on January 23 and returning on March 5 by way of the Red Sea. During this tour I was able to visit every province of the Sudan, with the exception of three, covering a distance of 5000 miles, and to gain a vivid first-hand impression of the problems of the country and of the excellence of the officials who were handling them on the spot. The knowledge thus acquired was, however, not destined to be practically applied; for, as previous chapters have related, the period of my sojourn in Egypt came very soon afterwards to a close, and with the subsequent history of the Sudan it is not my province to deal.

I must leave that great country, therefore, still

upon the threshold of its manhood. That, under the aegis of British central administration, it will grow to a prosperous maturity, I am profoundly certain. I am equally sure that British protection alone can guide its developments into right paths. I shall not attempt any forecasts as to its ultimate attainments. It still remains to be seen whether its so diverse components can ever be welded into a coherent whole and whether its traditional systems have in them the vitality to ensure a steady and vigorous growth. At the present time it is experiencing a period of lean-ness which cannot but be immensely discouraging to the devoted band of officials who for so many years have been striving to build secure foundations and waiting in the keen hope of seeing permanent prosperity arise upon them. An inscrutable Providence vouchsafes to very few overseas administrators the gift of seeing the fruit grow where they have planted. It is as much as they can reasonably hope for if they can carry away a conviction that their labours have been upon sound lines and that the results will endure at any rate for a season. That will inevitably ensue if the present policy of cautious advance is continued, and if nothing is attempted which is not well within the powers of the administration and of the native systems. The essential test to which all proposals should be submitted is the test of whether they will advance the welfare and prosperity of the people of the Sudan.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CONCLUSION

It is now perhaps possible to form an adequate and yet a concise summary of the course of our statesmanship in Egypt. From 1889 to 1922 our policy had followed a fairly consistent line. In spite of the fact that theory and practice had diverged very widely at important points, our foremost concern had been to secure the humane and stable administration of the affairs of the Egyptian masses.

In 1922 came a radical alteration. We were no longer to concern ourselves with the welfare of the Egyptian masses, who were to be handed over to the charge of a responsible Egyptian Government, and we were to retain only so much of the former machinery of our domination as would enable us to safeguard certain imperial interests which were vital to us and certain responsibilities to third parties of which we could not honourably divest ourselves. This retention was to continue until a friendly agreement could be arrived at with Egypt, which would provide, by mutual arrangement, for the protection of those interests and the discharge of those responsibilities.

The theory upon which this new policy was based was that in the political atmosphere which then existed no satisfactory agreement was possible, that

a unilateral act of concession on our part would begin the creation of a more favourable atmosphere, and that in course of time the improvement would develop to a point at which a comprehensive agreement covering all questions at issue would be possible. But, as before 1922, so after it, practice began at once to diverge from theory. Formerly we had shown no determination to depart from Egypt, and now we could find in our hearts no determination to stay.

The question was not one of declared policy but of the spirit in which that policy was adhered to. In Cromer's day our declared policy had been to put an end to the occupation, but Great Britain was not in the mood to carry it out. After 1922 our declared policy was to limit our responsibilities to a minimum and to maintain that minimum firmly, but we have not been able to find the mood necessary for this purpose either.

One of the most curious illustrations of this state of affairs is to be found in the hostile attitude widely adopted towards any critic who attempts to recall to mind our declared policy and to suggest that we should adhere to it. Before the War a similar treatment was accorded to those who suggested that in accordance with our declared policy we should end the occupation. He who in pre-War days stood for adherence to declarations, was dubbed a defeatist, whilst he who to-day urges the same adherence is accused—and the accusation is accepted with very little question—of being an "expansionist", one whose ruling passion is to exploit the world for the benefit of the British race. There are few who pause to consider that all this talk of expansion and of imperial aims is entirely beside the point. By 1900 we were firmly planted in Egypt, whether we liked it or not.

It merely confused the issue to argue about the ethical values of the actions which had taken us there. The men and the nations who were responsible for the world movements of those days acted in accordance with the ethical standards of their day and generation. It is temptingly easy to argue that they were hypocrites, but even if the argument is accepted as valid it proves nothing, except that our ideas and standards are different from theirs.

The problem bequeathed to us for consideration and for practical solution is how we are to act in the position in which we find ourselves. It is a severely practical problem, and its solution cannot be advanced at all by a discussion of origins.

Cromer's policy was, in regard to the administrative needs of Egypt, clear-cut: it was pursued over a term of years and produced results which can be studied and appraised. The policy of 1922 had also the advantage of being definite and comprehensible: Lord Allenby's determined action substituted a clear purpose for an attitude that had been obscure and uncertain. So far the policy of 1922 was comparable to the previous policy, but only so far. Had it been steadily followed over a term of years as Cromer's policy had been, it would have produced results by which it could have been judged. Unfortunately it was not adhered to: the administrative advantage of a clear-cut plan was lost almost immediately, and the obscurity and uncertainty closed in again.

The declaration of 1922 left us in a position which was comprehensible only upon the supposition that the policy then announced was adhered to. We were left with an army of occupation, and a position of outstanding influence—weapons that were potentially decisive. If we were not to

use those weapons for the purpose for which we had avowedly retained them, to what other use were they to be put and what would their actual effect be? We could remain inactive; we could stand aside and make no endeavour to direct the influence which our position and our Army did in fact continuously and inevitably exert: we could be passive spectators of the struggle between demagogic and autocratic rule, which in fact commenced immediately after the Constitution had been brought into being. We could watch this struggle develop to its climax, but we could not escape the fact that whichever side was in the end victorious would owe the maintenance of its power to the presence, however passive, of our Army and our influence.

When the struggle was concluded, we might hope perhaps to exercise, upon the victorious party, some measure of beneficial restraint—not directly, but merely because of its knowledge of what it owed to our support.

It may be argued, indeed, that we are now in the very position which the previous paragraph has outlined as the probable outcome. If so, the important question is whether we have arrived without knowing it at the goal which Cromer foreshadowed in "Modern Egypt"—have we crossed into the promised land of a native Egyptian government sufficiently humane and efficient to pass Cromer's test, and stable enough to endure? The answer must be not yet at least—for whatever the vices and virtues of her present government, there is still a British Army in Egypt, and there is still no stability that is not bound up with the presence of British troops and British influence.

From this general survey can any general principle



be deduced upon which we may with certainty depend? More and more clearly the conclusion seems to emerge that the real danger to those countries which have come under our control arises when the claims of good administration are subordinated to the claims of political theory. In the present confusion of our political thought there is no accepted standard by which we can judge whether the gifts we have to offer are blessings or curses. We are no longer so sure either of the beauty or the fertility of our western political discontents that we can afford to regard as "pathetic" the placid contentment of other races. We are no longer firm believers in the permanent value of what has so long been called progress; still less are we sure that the lines upon which our own development has run are the best lines for the development of other countries of a different stock. Law and order, internal peace and quietness, and impartial justice, these remain the only gifts about the advantages of which little argument would be heard. And if this is true, then there is really only one article of belief upon which we can confidently depend—that good administration is the first requirement to be fulfilled, and that all other questions are subordinate to it.

Apart from the benefits of good administration, what indeed have we to offer to subject or protected races that is not now of doubtful value? There are many observers whose answer to that question will be calculated to fill our minds with despair. They will say that association with western races destroys the organic natural growth, and puts nothing of value in its place: that we break off short and kill a tradition that has at least the mellow charm of age and continuity, and try to substitute for it a jerry-built product which has no foundations in the soil upon

which it is placed. The Arab, struggling with the hardships of life in the desert, develops, by association with these stern surroundings, virtues of hardihood, true comradeship, and romantic hospitality. What comparable virtues are to be found in his Westernised brother, who in bowler hat and brown boots earns a more comfortable livelihood as a parasite upon the fringes of Western civilisation? The Indian peasant, fitted so perfectly into the background of a village polity that is the work of centuries, draws from the earth upon which he toils a virtue that is not so clearly apparent in his cousin—the “failed B.A.” But although the truth of these contentions may be admitted, they are not relevant to the discussion, unless it can be proved that the conditions which they describe are the direct consequence of alien domination. We have always been careful not to interfere with indigenous customs and traditions. In Egypt many thoughtful observers have duly noted and complained of the absence of British culture or of any serious attempt to import it. In India, if, at the time British rule was consolidating itself, there had been any spring of natural culture to compete with the imported wares, we should assuredly not have weighted the scale in favour of the latter. It was not due to our governmental policy that village crafts died in India: the industrial revolution with its irresistible flood of cheap machine-made goods would have killed them there just as surely as it killed them elsewhere, whether we had been in possession or not. It was French culture which Egyptians so keenly sought and of which they obtained so strong a graft, and in India it was Indians themselves who half a century or more ago clamoured insistently for western education. Those who mourn for the good old days of

pastoral simplicity and the spinning-wheel may be right in contending that they were happier and better, but they cannot justly blame Government action for their disappearance.

To one charge, however, our imperial policy must plead guilty—the charge of advocating and implanting Western political ideas. It can, of course, be argued that they would have taken root without our interference, just as they have taken root and sprouted in countries where our influence was not officially predominant. But none the less we must clearly admit that we have deliberately stimulated the growth of democratic ideas and methods in the countries over which we have been ruling.

Here again we shall be accused of having done wrong—of having broken an old and not unhappy tradition of political thought that was still capable of natural growth. And here again the accusation is not relevant to our present problem, because it is not to be gainsaid that the good or the mischief we have done in this regard has gone too far to be undone now. We are faced with the situation as it is, and not with a clean slate upon which we can write whatever political thesis we like: and if this fact were once clearly comprehended it is very possible that we should be in a better position to arrive at a permanent solution of the difficulties which now beset us. If the history of our sojourn in Egypt teaches us anything at all, it is surely the impossibility of achieving any good result without a clear-cut policy honestly and courageously adhered to. In the confusion of our thought since the War, we have only once managed to devise such a policy, and that was in 1922 when Lord Allenby stated openly what was the logical conclusion of the drift

that had been allowed—accompanied always by vain protests—to take place, and forced the Government at home to accept his statements. But, as we have seen, the British Government began to drift again almost at once and the advantage was lost.

If, therefore, we are to salve our imperial destiny from the storm and wrack of post-War political confusion, we must steer clear of everything which is not clear-cut and consistent. We must rid ourselves of the dangerous illusion that we can achieve anything by promises, however liberal—to be redeemed in the distant future. On the other hand, we must refrain from declarations exhibiting a firmness of tone and temper, which is, in fact, non-existent.

All these maxims are of course only variations of, or corollaries to, the main fundamental proposition that the principles of good administration should be the principles by which our policy is invariably guided. The first duty, almost the only duty, of Government is good administration. It has no responsibility for the forcing of constitutional development. If it provides good administration, it provides the soil in which that development can grow. Should it grow, the Government may have a responsibility to foster and encourage it, but not to force it or to become so absorbed in tending it as to neglect greater responsibilities. Should it reach maturity, the Government must judge its capacities for self-government solely by the criterion of good administration and the welfare of the people for whom that government is still responsible.

The methods which the British have employed in dealing with the Asiatic and African races who have come under their influence, either as part of the British Empire or in some less definite status, have

been and are various, indeed. Between the method of direct rule which is now coming in for so much criticism and the "indirect rule" plan which it has been fashionable for some time to eulogise, there are infinite variations and gradations. As western political ideals have lost their sacrosanctity, and as their suitability for the use of Eastern or African races has come in question, so "indirect rule" has come into vogue. But it is permissible to wonder whether, in the course of a decade or two, indirect rule will not also be rejected by the theorists. Western self-government may mean progress on wrong lines, but may not indirect rule, judged from the same angle, mean stagnation? It is urged that the system retains all that is good in indigenous institutions and cuts out all that is bad. But who decides what is good and what is bad? So long as that question is decided by Western standards the decision must in effect impose an alien culture and may result therefore in destroying natural vitality. Children have this question decided for them, and as long as it is decided for them, they remain children.

In fact, in the background of all these systems, with their successes and their failures, there is discoverable only one common factor which connects and gives impulse to them all—the need for efficient, firm, and impartial administration and the capacity to supply it. Whatever else is attempted, however sincere and high-minded the objects which are aimed at, the effort must be judged to be misguided if it removes from the people concerned the security and the opportunities for justice which they have already attained.

It will at once be urged that, however sound the rule just described may be, it is of little present value.

The time has gone by when the situation would admit of the application of so simple a maxim. Undertakings have been entered into, foundations have been laid and policies have been followed which enormously complicate our present problems. The truth of this assertion must of course be admitted. But surely, even in the complex circumstances in which we now find ourselves, it cannot but be right to pay the first and the most prolonged attention to the interests and welfare of the general body of those for whom we are responsible. We may no longer be able to regard this as our sole concern, but none the less it remains a responsibility which must strictly limit our efforts in other fields. And apart from all questions of the universal principles of government, there is in history convincing support for the view that our imperial responsibilities were successfully discharged so long as this maxim was regarded, and that our success diminished in proportion as we lost sight of it.

The final—and the most plausibly dangerous—argument of all is that which seeks to disguise a lack of policy and of firmness in the stolen garments of common sense and foresight. Whenever it is proposed that this country should follow a clear-cut policy or adhere to a definite principle, there will be a chorus of voices adjuring us to do nothing rash. Only the fool, they will cry, in these chaotic times is stupid enough to be dogmatic. Only the wise man has the courage and the intelligence to realise that this is an age of transition in which we live, where nothing can be certain and no light is trustworthy. Here and there among the general audience will be some who will question whether it takes much intelligence to realise that we live in an age of transition—whether, indeed, the human race has not always lived in an age of

transition. Indeed, more expert historians than I have pointed out that one age of transition inexorably succeeds another in the history of the world. The first duty of courage and foresight is to realise that the difference between past and present ages lies only in this, that the speed of transition is more rapid than it has ever been before. In the past, statesmen and administrators have not acted upon the principle of "safety first" or shrunk from decision just because the world was changing. Foresight and courage were qualities which issued in action rather than in procrastination and despair. In the present they are more needed than ever. The changes with which the future is pregnant come to meet us with a swifter onrush than ever before and exact therefore a keener foresight and a more rapid power of decision. It is delightful, of course, to be assured that if we do nothing but sit and watch with folded hands, we are earning a reputation for wisdom and courage: delightful to assume that events are beyond our control and that statesmanship consists in realising this and announcing it to the public. But it is very difficult to believe that even this great country, equipped by its imperial position to play a leading part in the councils of the world, can maintain its influence by a persistent refusal to act. Should we not better display the virtues of wisdom and courage if, even in this age of transition in which we live, we were to adhere with tenacity to those fundamental principles which do not change and have never changed. Even in the shifting present-day world, stirred to a whirlpool by the activities of applied science, the foundations of these principles are not shaken. They emerge, indeed, clearer and stronger than before, swept free by the storm of all ephemeral accretions, and not

yet overlaid by the new driftwood which the whirlpool is throwing up.

With these final sentences I must take leave of the task which was set me. I have recounted in its main aspects the story of the British connexion with Egypt since the closing days of Cromer's long and beneficent administration. The years which have since supervened have been years of struggle long drawn out, darkened by failure and too often by bitter tragedy. It is indeed a story powerfully dramatic in its essential elements and I lay down my pen very conscious of the drama and of my inability to do it full justice.

“ . . . And if I have done well, and as is fitting the “story, it is that which I desired: but, if slenderly and “meanly, it is that which I could attain unto . . . “and here shall be an end.”





## APPENDIX A

### MILNER MISSION REPORT

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE MISSION AFTER LEAVING EGYPT

##### A.—*Discussions with Egyptian Delegates in London*

WE left Egypt at the end of the first week of March, travelling by different routes, and met again in London about the middle of April, with the view of drawing up our Report. But soon after we had begun to do so, a new and not wholly unexpected development of the situation caused us to interrupt our work, in the hope of being able to obtain fuller information with regard to the capital point on which, when leaving Egypt, we had still remained in doubt. That point, as already explained, was the attitude likely to be adopted by the chief exponents of Nationalist opinion towards the policy which we were ourselves disposed to advise the British Government to adopt. A prospect, however, now presented itself of clearing up this point of doubt by the Mission coming into direct contact with Zaghlul Pasha.

At the end of April Adli Pasha, who commands the universal respect of his countrymen and whose advice had been of the greatest value to us in Egypt, paid a visit to Paris, and at once put himself into communication with Zaghlul Pasha with the object of bringing about a meeting between him and the Mission. Early in May we became aware that, largely owing to Adli Pasha's good offices, Zaghlul Pasha and the Delegation were now disposed to abandon their former attitude and enter into direct relations with the Mission. Accordingly, during the third week in May, Mr. (now Sir Cecil) Hurst, who happened to be in Paris, conveyed to them an invitation to meet the Mission in London. Zaghlul Pasha, having satisfied himself that by so doing he would not compromise his position as the advocate of

Egyptian independence, arrived in London on the 7th June. He was accompanied by seven members of the Delegation, who were subsequently joined by one or two of their colleagues.

Then followed a series of conversations which, with frequent interruptions, due to the fact that several of the members of the Mission were now busily engaged in other work, lasted till the middle of August.

These prolonged discussions took a variety of forms. There were a number of meetings at which the Mission, as a body, met Zaghlul Pasha and his companions, Adli Pasha being also present. From time to time points which it was found difficult to discuss in so large a body were referred to committees consisting of a few members of either party, and these to some extent cleared the ground. Moreover, there was, in the interval between formal meetings, a great deal of useful private discussion between individual members of the Mission and one or more of the Egyptians. It would serve no useful purpose to try and give an account of the many changing phases of this lengthy debate, but it is necessary to indicate its general character.

In the first place, we record with pleasure that very friendly relations were maintained from first to last, and that, even when differences of opinion were sharpest, the controversy was always conducted in an amicable spirit. There was never any doubt in our minds that our visitors were as sincerely anxious as we were ourselves to find a way out of the difficulties of the situation. But they were to some extent hampered—and this is specially true of Zaghlul Pasha himself—by the uncompromising line which they had taken in the recent past, when they believed that there was an unbridgeable gulf between Egyptian aspirations and the policy of Great Britain. They had no doubt come to recognise by this time that they had misunderstood that policy, but it was not easy for them to readjust their position to suit their altered view of British intentions. Over and over again they declared that it was impossible for them to accept some proposal or other made by us, the fairness of which they did not directly dispute, because it was inconsistent with the “mandate” which they had received from the Egyptian people. It was useless to point out to them that the alleged “mandate” was really their own programme, which the

Egyptian public had simply accepted from them, and that there was nothing to prevent their modifying a policy of their own creation. The reply always was, that they had no authority to depart from claims which, even if originally put forward by themselves, had been enthusiastically endorsed by a great majority of their countrymen. The war-cries of the past eighteen months were, indeed, a perpetual stumbling-block, and, while in the course of our discussions we were often very near agreement on points of substance, it was always difficult to clothe such agreement in words which did not conflict with formulae to which the Egyptians felt themselves committed.

The idea of a Treaty between Great Britain and Egypt was readily accepted. That was our starting-point, and without it we should have made little progress. *But when it came to discussing those terms of the Treaty which embodied the few, but essential, safeguards for British and foreign interests, the Egyptians were always extremely apprehensive of agreeing to something which might conflict with their ideal of independence. As a matter of fact, our proposals did not conflict with that ideal—reasonably interpreted—as the Egyptians themselves, or at any rate some of them, were ready to admit. But there was always the fear in their minds that their countrymen would not take the same view, and that they would be regarded in Egypt as having betrayed the national cause.*

In spite of these difficulties, one obstacle after another was gradually surmounted, and we finally succeeded in drafting the outlines of a settlement with which both parties were more or less satisfied. *This result was only achieved by considerable concessions on the part of the Mission.* On one point in particular, to which we shall presently refer at greater length, we acquiesced in a claim on the part of the Egyptians which we were at first disposed to resist, because we were assured that the admission of that claim would do more than anything else to gratify popular sentiment in Egypt. This concession seemed to us not too high a price to pay if it secured the cordial acceptance of the scheme as a whole by the Egyptian people. Moreover, we were bound to recognise that the delegates also were ready to give up a good deal of what they had originally demanded, in their anxiety to come to a good understanding with the Mission.

The compromise thus reached was one which commended itself to us on its merits subject to one essential condition. That condition was that Zaghlul and his associates would undertake to use all their influence to obtain its acceptance by the people of Egypt, and ultimately to get a Treaty giving effect to it approved by an Egyptian Popular Assembly. This, as it seemed to us, was no more than we had a right to ask of them. We could not, indeed, expect them to promise that their efforts would be successful, any more than we could ourselves promise that our advice would be approved by the British Government and the British people. What we did demand was that they should commit themselves to supporting wholeheartedly the result of our joint efforts. For unless they did this, it was too much to hope that the settlement would be rightly understood, much less cordially welcomed, in Egypt. Yet it would be idle for us, if we could not cherish that hope, to recommend it ourselves as a solution of the Egyptian problem. The British people, we believed, would be quite willing to accord very generous terms to Egypt, but only if they were convinced that those terms would be gratefully accepted and would lead to permanently improved relations and hearty co-operation between them and the Egyptians in the future.

Zaghlul Pasha and his friends were, however, not yet prepared to commit themselves to this extent. They were evidently still nervous of being repudiated by a considerable number of their followers in Egypt. They accordingly kept on suggesting further modifications of the terms so far agreed to, mainly on points of form, with the view of making them more acceptable to Egyptian opinion. But we had now gone as far as we deemed wise in the way of concession. For we, too, as we did not fail to point out, had to reckon with public opinion, and it was no use to agree to anything, with a view of pleasing the Egyptians, which would lead to the rejection of the whole scheme in Great Britain. We seemed, therefore, after all, to have reached an impasse.

B.—*The Memorandum of August 18, 1920*

At this stage, however, it was suggested on the Egyptian side that the discussion should be temporarily suspended, in

order that some members of the Delegation might have time to visit Egypt, to explain to the public of that country the nature of the settlement which the Mission was disposed to recommend, and the great advantages which Egypt would derive from it. If, as they hoped, they met with a favourable reception, this would constitute a "mandate" from the people which would justify the Delegation, on the return of the emissaries, in pledging itself to give our proposals an unconditional support. Zaghlul Pasha himself was not disposed to undertake the journey, but he approved of the idea, and three or four of his companions were willing to go.

This proposal had obvious advantages from the Egyptian point of view. For it would enable the emissaries to advocate the acceptance of certain terms without being absolutely committed to them, and thus running the risk of finding themselves isolated from the bulk of their party in case those terms met with an unfavourable reception. But it had advantages for us also, inasmuch as the general public discussion, which was bound to ensue, would enable us to gauge Egyptian opinion more completely than had yet been possible, and to judge of the comparative strength of moderate and extreme Nationalists. A memorandum was accordingly drawn up—the last of a series of efforts to reduce the result of our discussions to a definite shape—which laid down in general terms the main features of the settlement which, on the condition already specified, the Mission would be disposed to recommend. The object of the memorandum was to enable the emissaries to elicit an expression of Egyptian public opinion. This document, which presently came to be known as the "Milner-Zaghlul Agreement", but which, on the face of it, was not an agreement, but merely an outline of the bases on which an agreement might subsequently be framed, was handed by Lord Milner to Adli Pasha, who, as an intermediary between the two parties, had had a large share in all our negotiations, to be communicated by him to Zaghlul Pasha and his friends. It was understood that they might make free use of it in public discussion in Egypt. It was dated the 18th August and was in the following terms:—

"The accompanying memorandum is the result of conversa-

“tions held in London in June to August 1920 between Lord  
 “Milner and the members of the Special Mission to Egypt, and  
 “Zaghlul Pasha and the members of the Egyptian Delegation,  
 “in which conversations Adli Pasha also took part. It outlines  
 “a policy for the settlement of the Egyptian question in the best  
 “interests both of Great Britain and Egypt.

“The members of the Mission are prepared to recommend the  
 “British Government to adopt the policy indicated in the memor-  
 “andum, if they are satisfied that Zaghlul Pasha and the  
 “Delegation are likewise prepared to advocate it, and will use all  
 “their influence to obtain the assent of an Egyptian National  
 “Assembly to the conclusion of such a Treaty as is contemplated  
 “in Articles 3 and 4.

“It is clear that unless both parties are cordially united in  
 “supporting it, the policy here suggested cannot be pursued with  
 “success.

(Signed) MILNER.

### *Memorandum*

“1. In order to establish the independence of Egypt on a  
 “secure and lasting basis, it is necessary that the relations be-  
 “tween Great Britain and Egypt should be precisely defined, and  
 “the privileges and immunities now enjoyed in Egypt by the  
 “capitulatory Powers should be modified and rendered less in-  
 “jurious to the interests of the country.

“2. These ends cannot be achieved without further negotia-  
 “tions between accredited representatives of the British and  
 “Egyptian Governments respectively in the one case, and be-  
 “tween the British Government and the Governments of the  
 “capitulatory Powers in the other case. Such negotiations will be  
 “directed to arriving at definite agreements on the following  
 “lines:—

“3.—(i) As between Egypt and Great Britain a Treaty will  
 “be entered into, under which Great Britain will recog-  
 “nise the independence of Egypt as a constitutional  
 “monarchy with representative institutions, and Egypt  
 “will confer upon Great Britain such rights as are neces-  
 “sary to safeguard her special interests and to enable  
 “her to furnish the guarantees which must be given to

“foreign Powers to secure the relinquishment of their  
“capitulatory rights.

- “(ii) By the same Treaty, an alliance will be concluded between Great Britain and Egypt, by which Great Britain will undertake to support Egypt in defending the integrity of her territory, and Egypt will undertake, in case of war, even when the integrity of Egypt is not affected, to render to Great Britain all the assistance in her power, within her own borders, including the use of her harbours, aerodromes and means of communication for military purposes.

“4. This Treaty will embody stipulations to the following effect :—

- “(i) Egypt will enjoy the right to representation in foreign countries. In the absence of any duly-accredited Egyptian representative, the Egyptian Government will confide its interests to the care of the British representative. Egypt will undertake not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or will create difficulties for Great Britain, and will also undertake not to enter into any agreement with a foreign Power which is prejudicial to British interests.

- “(ii) Egypt will confer on Great Britain the right to maintain a military force on Egyptian soil for the protection of her Imperial communications. The Treaty will fix the place where the force shall be quartered and will regulate any subsidiary matters which require to be arranged. The presence of this force shall not constitute in any manner a military occupation of the country, or prejudice the rights of the Government of Egypt.

- “(iii) Egypt will appoint, in concurrence with His Majesty’s Government, a Financial Adviser, to whom shall be entrusted in due course the powers at present exercised by the Commissioners of the Debt, and who will be at the disposal of the Egyptian Government for all other matters on which they may desire to consult him.

- “(iv) Egypt will appoint, in concurrence with His Majesty’s Government, an official in the Ministry of Justice,



“who shall enjoy the right of access to the Minister.  
 “He shall be kept fully informed on all matters connected with the administration of the law as affecting  
 “foreigners, and will also be at the disposal of the  
 “Egyptian Government for consultation on any matter  
 “connected with the efficient maintenance of law and  
 “order.

- “(v) In view of the contemplated transfer to His Majesty’s  
 “Government of the rights hitherto exercised under the  
 “régime of the Capitulations by the various foreign  
 “Governments, Egypt recognises the right of Great  
 “Britain to intervene, through her representative in  
 “Egypt, to prevent the application to foreigners of any  
 “Egyptian law now requiring foreign consent, and  
 “Great Britain on her side undertakes not to exercise  
 “this right except in the case of laws operating inequitably against foreigners.

“*Alternative:—*

“In view of the contemplated transfer to His Majesty’s Government of the rights hitherto exercised under the  
 “régime of the Capitulations by the various foreign  
 “Governments, Egypt recognises the right of Great  
 “Britain to intervene, through her representative in  
 “Egypt, to prevent the application to foreigners of any  
 “Egyptian law now requiring foreign consent, and  
 “Great Britain on her side undertakes not to exercise  
 “this right except in the case of laws inequitably discriminating against foreigners in the matter of taxation, or inconsistent with the principles of legislation  
 “common to all the capitulatory Powers.

- “(vi) On account of the special relations between Great  
 “Britain and Egypt created by the Alliance, the British  
 “representative will be accorded an exceptional position in Egypt and will be entitled to precedence over  
 “all other representatives.

- “(vii) The engagements of British and other foreign officers  
 “and administrative officials who entered into the  
 “service of the Egyptian Government before the com-

“ing into force of the Treaty may be terminated, at the  
“instance of either the officials themselves or the  
“Egyptian Government, at any time within two years  
“after the coming into force of the Treaty. The pension  
“or compensation to be accorded to officials retiring  
“under this provision, in addition to that provided by  
“the existing law, shall be determined by the Treaty.  
“In cases where no advantage is taken of this arrange-  
“ment existing terms of service will remain unaffected.

“5. This Treaty will be submitted to the approval of a Con-  
“stituent Assembly, but it will not come into force until after  
“the agreements with foreign Powers for the closing of their Con-  
“sular Courts and the decrees for the reorganisation of the  
“Mixed Tribunals have come into operation.

“6. This Constituent Assembly will also be charged with the  
“duty of framing a new Organic Statute, in accordance with the  
“provisions of which the Government of Egypt will in future  
“be conducted. This Statute will embody provisions for the  
“Ministers being responsible to the Legislature. It will also pro-  
“vide for religious toleration for all persons and for the due  
“protection of the rights of foreigners.

“7. The necessary modifications in the régime of the Capitu-  
“lations will be secured by agreements to be concluded by Great  
“Britain with the various capitulatory Powers. These agreements  
“will provide for the closing of the foreign Consular Courts, so  
“as to render possible the reorganisation and extension of the  
“jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals and the application to  
“all foreigners in Egypt of the legislation (including legislation  
“imposing taxation) enacted by the Egyptian Legislature.

“8. These agreements will provide for the transfer to His  
“Majesty's Government of the rights previously exercised under  
“the régime of the Capitulations by the various foreign Govern-  
“ments. They will also contain stipulations to the following  
“effect:—

“(a) No attempt will be made to discriminate against the  
“nationals of a Power which agrees to close its Consular  
“Courts, and such nationals shall enjoy in Egypt the  
“same treatment as British subjects.

- “(b) The Egyptian Nationality Law will be founded on the  
     “*jus sanguinis*, so that the children born in Egypt of a  
     “foreigner will enjoy the nationality of their father,  
     “and will not be claimed as Egyptian subjects.
- “(c) Consular officers of the foreign Powers shall be accorded  
     “by Egypt the same status as foreign Consuls enjoy  
     “in England.
- “(d) Existing Treaties and Conventions to which Egypt is a  
     “party on matters of commerce and navigation, includ-  
     “ing postal and telegraphic Conventions, will remain in  
     “force. Pending the conclusion of special agreements  
     “to which she is a party, Egypt will apply the Treaties  
     “in force between Great Britain and the foreign Power  
     “concerned on questions affected by the closing of  
     “the Consular Courts, such as extradition Treaties,  
     “Treaties for the surrender of seamen deserters, etc.,  
     “as also Treaties of a political nature, whether multi-  
     “lateral or bilateral, *e.g.* arbitration Conventions and  
     “the various Conventions relating to the conduct of  
     “hostilities.
- “(e) The liberty to maintain schools and to teach the language  
     “of the foreign country concerned will be guaranteed,  
     “provided that such schools are subject in all respects  
     “to the laws applicable generally to European schools  
     “in Egypt.
- “(f) The liberty to maintain or organise religious and chari-  
     “table foundations, such as hospitals, etc., will also be  
     “guaranteed.

“The Treaties will also provide for the necessary changes in  
 “the Commission of the Debt and the elimination of the inter-  
 “national element in the Alexandria Board of Health.

“9. The legislation rendered necessary by the aforesaid  
 “agreements between Great Britain and the foreign Powers,  
 “will be effected by decrees to be issued by the Egyptian Govern-  
 “ment.

“A decree shall be enacted at the same time validating all  
 “measures, legislative, administrative or judicial, taken under  
 “Martial Law.

“10. The decrees for the reorganisation of the Mixed Tri-

“bunals will provide for conferring upon these Tribunals all jurisdiction hitherto exercised by the foreign Consular Courts, while leaving the jurisdiction of the Native Courts untouched.

“11. After the coming into force of the Treaty referred to in Article 3, Great Britain will communicate its terms to foreign Powers and will support an application by Egypt for admission as a member of the League of Nations.

“August 18, 1920.”

### *C.—The Policy of the Memorandum*

#### *1. Representation of Egypt in Foreign Countries*

The policy of the above document in its general character is in accordance with the conclusions at which, for the reasons already given, we had arrived before leaving Egypt. But, as a result of our discussions with Zaghlul Pasha and his associates, we were now prepared to go somewhat further. The most important point on which we were led by their arguments to modify our earlier view is one to which the memorandum gives especial prominence, viz. the right of Egypt to appoint her own representatives in foreign countries. It has always been, and is, from our point of view, a fundamental principle that the foreign relations of Egypt should be under the general direction of Great Britain. All reasonable Egyptians, however strongly Nationalist, recognise the immense value of the security which an alliance with Great Britain would afford them. But it is obviously impossible to expect that Great Britain should shoulder the responsibility of defending the integrity and independence of Egypt against all possible dangers, if that country were free to pursue a policy of her own in foreign affairs inconsistent with or prejudicial to the policy of Great Britain. This axiom none of the Egyptians with whom we were dealing ever attempted to dispute. They were quite prepared—in a Treaty of Alliance—to give whatever pledges might be necessary to exclude the possibility of any action on the part of Egypt which could cause embarrassment to her great ally. There was, indeed, no difference of opinion on this point in the course of our discussions, and the words of the memorandum dealing with it appear to us

to make the complete understanding which existed with regard to the subject sufficiently clear. For in this, as in other respects, it must always be borne in mind that in drawing up the memorandum we were not attempting to draft a Treaty, but simply to express in ordinary language the ideas which a Treaty, to be subsequently negotiated, would express with much more detail and in terms of greater precision.

The real issue here was not whether Egypt should be free to follow a foreign policy independent of Great Britain—the impossibility of our assenting to this was not disputed—but whether this principle necessarily involved the conduct of all her foreign relations remaining in British hands.

This was a question upon which we had already, before discussing it with the Egyptians at all, come to a very definite conclusion. In our opinion British control should be limited to Egypt's political relations. Egyptian commercial or other interests of a non-political character in foreign countries had better be left in Egyptian hands. These interests are numerous and growing. The development of commerce and communications, the rapidly increasing number of Egyptians who now travel or reside abroad, especially in Western Europe, and the multifarious connections which they form there, constitute a need for a certain amount of official protection. If the duty of looking after all Egyptian private interests abroad is to continue to fall upon British diplomatic and consular agents, it will become an excessive burden. And the inevitable failure to discharge that duty to the satisfaction of the Egyptians will be a constant source of grievance. For these reasons it seemed to us from the first to be eminently desirable that Egypt should appoint representatives of her own in foreign countries.

But what we originally contemplated was that these Egyptian representatives should have only consular and not diplomatic status. It was on this point that during our discussions in London we came, not without hesitation, to adopt a different view. The Egyptians were all absolutely unanimous in maintaining that the denial of diplomatic status to the representatives of Egypt vitiated the idea of an Alliance and would make the settlement we were contemplating entirely unacceptable to their countrymen. And in this assertion we believed them to be

justified. For, even while in Egypt, we had realised that all Egyptians, including the Sultan and his Ministers, however much they were divided on other questions, were united in their desire for the diplomatic representation of their country abroad. It was a sore point with all of them that, when declaring the Protectorate, we had dispensed with an Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and placed the Egyptian Foreign Office, with which it was found impossible to dispense, under the High Commissioner. The hope was universal that, when the time came to put the relations of Great Britain and Egypt on a permanent footing, we should allow the Ministry for Foreign Affairs once more to have an Egyptian chief and foreign representatives, as of old, to be directly accredited to the ruler of Egypt. And on the same principle it was hoped that, now that Turkish suzerainty had disappeared, Egyptian representatives in those foreign countries to which it might be necessary to send them would enjoy a similar status to that of foreign representatives in Egypt.

In this matter, therefore, we could have no doubt that the Egyptian delegates were speaking for all their countrymen. And, indeed, they were most emphatic in declaring that, unless we could meet them on this point, there was no prospect of settling the future relations between Great Britain and Egypt by the method of agreement. On the other hand this recognition of the status of Egypt would, as they affirmed, be so great a satisfaction to national pride that it would make the acceptance of all our other conditions easy. And what, they asked, were we afraid of? We recognised that Egypt had many interests of her own in foreign countries, which could best be looked after by Egyptians. There was no advantage to Great Britain in withholding from the men entrusted with the care of those interests the dignity of diplomatic status. For they could not take any action injurious to British interests or conflicting with British policy, without breaking the Treaty, which, as had already been agreed between us, was to be so drafted as to preclude the possibility of such action. Moreover, the number of Egypt's diplomatic representatives abroad would be very limited. Egypt did not desire, and could not afford, to have such representatives in more than a few countries. The fact that everywhere else

Egyptian interests would be entrusted to the care of Great Britain marked the specially intimate character of the relations between the two countries.

We could not but feel that these were weighty considerations. At the same time it was evident, as we strongly insisted, that the presence of Egyptian diplomatists, even in a few European capitals, and of foreign diplomatists in Cairo, would afford opportunities for intrigue, which might lead to much trouble. The very fact that these diplomatists would, in the political sphere, have really nothing to do might tempt them to justify their existence by transgressing their proper functions. But the delegates would not admit that there was any real danger of this happening. Their view was that, satisfied with the position acquired by Egypt under the Treaty, the Egyptians would be the last to favour intrigues, which might give other foreign nations an opportunity of interfering in their country by first making mischief between them and Great Britain. The greatest safeguard which we could have against such machinations was the fact that the Egyptians themselves would be whole-heartedly in favour of an Alliance which fully recognised their national status and dignity.

Such were the arguments which led us to reconsider our position on the question of diplomatic status. In so doing we were well aware, and we frankly told the delegates, that this was a concession which might alarm public opinion in this country and imperil the acceptance of the agreement as a whole by the British people. And, judging from the unfavourable comments which this proposal has already excited in many quarters, it is evident that we were not mistaken in anticipating that it would meet with serious opposition. Nevertheless, we remain of opinion that the balance of argument is decisively in its favour. So long as bitterness and friction continue to exist between Great Britain and Egypt, we shall always be exposed to the hostility of Egyptians in foreign countries. Associations for the purpose of anti-British propaganda have been actively at work for a number of years in Switzerland, France, Germany and Italy. There is no remedy for this, except in restoring friendly relations, and we rely on the whole policy here proposed to have this effect. If that result is achieved there will, in our opinion, be

positive advantages in giving diplomatic status to Egyptian representatives abroad. For if, as is only to be expected, a certain number of irreconcilables are still left to carry on the campaign against Great Britain, the official representatives of Egypt will be bound to try to restrain them. *No Egyptian Minister could do otherwise than discountenance activities on the part of his own countrymen, directed against Egypt's ally, without failing in his duty and rendering himself liable to be recalled.*

## 2. *The Defence of Imperial Communications*

The supreme importance which the delegates attached to the question of national status was once more strongly in evidence when we came to deal with Great Britain's strategic interest in Egypt—the protection of her Imperial communications. To Great Britain—as an ally—they thought that Egypt could, without indignity, accord a base in Egyptian territory, “a strong place of arms”, a *point d'appui* in the chain of her Imperial defences, linking East and West. They were not averse from the idea that Great Britain, in case of war, should have the command of Egyptian resources, and especially of all means of communication, railways, aerodromes, etc., for the conduct of military operations. Such a stipulation was even welcome as emphasising the “bilateral” character of the agreement between the two countries, inasmuch as Egypt would be giving something in exchange for what she got. As by a Treaty of Alliance, Great Britain would be undertaking to defend Egypt, it was only fair that Egypt should do something to assist the British Empire, if Great Britain was engaged in a war, even a war in which Egypt was not directly interested.

A more difficult point was the maintenance of a British military force in Egypt in time of peace. But here again it was not so much the numbers of the force in question which interested the Egyptians as its character. As long as it was not there as an “Army of Occupation”, as a force intended to “keep order” in Egypt, which was merely another way of saying to keep Egypt in subjection, but was maintained for an external object, the defence of the British Empire, the presence of a British force in Egypt was justifiable from their point of view. The question of the strength of that force was never raised in the course of



the discussion. It was recognised that this depended on external conditions and, apart from what would be necessary if Egypt was herself in danger, might vary with the varying exigencies of Imperial defence. The great point was, that it should not be regarded in any sense as a garrison of Egypt. The maintenance of internal order was a matter for the Egyptians themselves.

In order to emphasise this aspect of the case the delegates urged very strongly, that the force in question should be stationed on the bank of the Suez Canal and preferably on its eastern side. But to this it was quite impossible for us to agree. For, in the first place, the presence of British troops in the neutral "canal zone" would be calculated to raise trouble with other Powers interested in that international waterway. The neutrality of the canal is guaranteed by international agreements and the permanent occupation of the canal zone by troops of any single Power might be challenged as a breach of that neutrality. Moreover, Great Britain's strategic interest in Egypt is not limited to securing a free passage through the Suez Canal. "The defence of her Imperial communications" involves much more than that. For Egypt is becoming more and more a "nodal point" in the complex of those communications by land and air as well as by sea. In face of these considerations, the idea of fixing Kantara, or some other spot in the canal zone, as the site of a cantonment had to be abandoned and, the principle of the maintenance of a British military force in Egypt having been admitted, the question where that force should be stationed was left open—to be settled, with other details, in the official negotiations for the conclusion of the contemplated Treaty.

### *3. The British Officials in the Egyptian Service*

The seventh clause of Article IV. of the memorandum deals with the position of British officials in the Egyptian service. This is a matter of supreme importance to the good government of Egypt. The whole system of internal administration as it exists to-day has been mainly built up by the work and example of British officials, many of whom have spent the best part of their lives in the country. The immediate elimination of the British element would bring the whole fabric down in ruins.

Even an over-hasty reduction of that element would threaten its stability, and greatly impair the efficient conduct of public business.

It is not indeed to be feared that, with the retirement of the British officials, the country would relapse into the state of mal-administration from which we have delivered it, and that all the old evils would return. The number of Egyptians qualified by education and character to take part in the work of government on civilised principles has greatly increased since the occupation. All the Egyptians, even the humblest, have become so habituated to the new standard of orderly, equitable and honest administration, that a complete return to the abuses of the past would not be tolerated. Nevertheless, the "new model" would certainly be exposed to danger of serious deterioration if the men who have built it up and are still its mainstay were to be suddenly withdrawn.

Thus it is only natural that the proposal to leave a purely Egyptian Government entirely free to retain or not to retain British or other foreign officials in the Civil Service should be at first sight regarded with considerable uneasiness. But a calm consideration of the practical aspects of the case is calculated greatly to allay these misgivings. *The idea of any Egyptian Government, however free to do so, attempting to make a clean sweep of its foreign officials is a chimera.* One has only to picture the plight of such a Government, suddenly deprived of its most experienced and responsible advisers and confronted with the general unpopularity which the consequent administrative breakdown would entail, to realise that no sane men would deliberately plunge into such a sea of trouble. And it is not only Egyptian disapproval which would have to be reckoned with, but the anger and alarm of the foreign residents. The large and wealthy foreign Colonies, on which the economic welfare of Egypt so greatly depends, would at once be up in arms. For these have all come to regard the presence of a British nucleus in the administration as the sheet-anchor of their own safety and prosperity. *Nor is it to be anticipated that the High Commissioner—or whatever the British representative may in future be called—would not have a word to say in the matter.* True, he will, *ex hypothesi*, have no right to dictate to the Egyptian

Government. But as the representative of Egypt's ally, as the foremost foreigner in Egypt, and the guardian of foreign interests, he will still carry great weight, and it will always be a matter of interest to Egyptian Ministers to be on good terms with him. The influences which would militate against the abuse by these Ministers of the right to dispense with the services of British officials are thus immensely strong. And at the same time the great satisfaction which they would feel at knowing that they had that right, and that the British officials were really there to assist and not to dictate, would make them more and not less ready to rely on British help.

*For no sensible Egyptian seriously wishes to dispense with foreign aid in the government of his country, or believes that Egypt could, for a long time to come at any rate, afford to do without it.* Egyptians generally no doubt think, and they are right in thinking, that the importation of British officials has sometimes, especially of late years, been overdone. They hold firmly to the principle that no Englishman or other foreigner should be appointed to any post for which a reasonably competent man of their own race can be found. They look forward to the time when the whole or almost the whole of the public service will be staffed by their fellow-countrymen. They feel that progress in that direction has been unduly slow and would like to see it sensibly accelerated. But they certainly do not wish to get rid of those British officials—and there are a goodly number of them—whom they really respect, or to be precluded from engaging others of equal competence in the service of their country in the future.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We took considerable pains to discover the truth about the number of foreign officials in the Egyptian Service. Returns were prepared for us by the Statistical Department, showing the distribution of all posts in the 1919-1920 Budget, while a comparative statement was called for from each Ministry, showing the distribution of pensionable and contract posts in the years 1905, 1910, 1914 and 1920.

In the returns submitted by the Statistical Department, posts are described as "pensionable", "contract", "monthly paid", and "daily paid". In the two latter classes 98½ per cent. of the posts are occupied by Egyptians. So in this category foreign competition is evidently not excessive.

An examination of the pensionable and contract posts, however, revealed a different state of affairs. Omitting the seven ministerial posts, the staff of the Sultan's Cabinet, the Council of Ministers, the Legislative Assembly and the Ministry of Wakfs, in which, with one or two exceptions, the posts are held

The danger lies rather in the opposite direction. There may be a stampede of British and other foreign officials, scared by the prospect of finding themselves at the mercy of a purely Egyptian Government. That would be a grave misfortune, but it seems to us very improbable that such an exodus will ever assume large dimensions. In the first place, there are in many branches of the Public Service, such as ports, railways, customs, public works, etc., a considerable number of Englishmen and other Europeans, who are employed as experts for lack of Egyptians possessing the necessary technical skill. These men are not likely to feel their position in any way affected by a

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exclusively by Egyptians, Egyptians hold 86 per cent. of the posts in the administration and draw 71 per cent. of the salaries, while the British hold 6 per cent. of the posts and draw 19 per cent. of the salaries, others (viz., non-Egyptian and non-British) holding 8 per cent. of the posts and drawing 10 per cent. of the salaries. In some statistical diagrams which were prepared to show the distribution of these posts and salaries among the different Ministries, the posts are divided into six classes. The first three classes range from the lowest salaries to £E.799 per annum, and may be described as "Lower Posts"; the other three classes cover "Higher Posts", and include salaries of £E.800 to £E.2999.

Among the lower posts, Egyptians hold roughly two-thirds of those between £E.240 and £E.499; but after that the Egyptian share declines to little more than one-third of the posts between £E.500 and £E.799. In the higher posts the disparity is even more marked and the Egyptian share does not amount to one-quarter. It is true that in the £E.1200-£1499 class, the Egyptian share rises to over one-third, but this can be traced to the Ministries of Interior and Justice, which provide Egyptian Mudirs (Provincial Governors) and Judges. In the higher posts of the Ministries of Finance, Education, Public Works, Agriculture, and Communications, however, there are only 31 Egyptians, as against 168 British and 32 "others" holding posts over £E.800. Doubtless in these particular Ministries there are many higher posts requiring special technical qualifications which it is impossible at the moment to find Egyptians qualified to fill. If, however, Egyptians are to be responsible for the internal administration of their country, it is essential that better provision should be made for training them to occupy such higher posts.

As far as the comparative tables showing the distribution of pensionable and contract posts in 1905, 1910, 1914, and 1920 are concerned, owing to the imperfect state of the records the figures can only be regarded as approximate. They sufficed, however, to give a general impression of the turnover in personnel. In the total of posts the Egyptian element has grown from 45.1 per cent. in 1905 to 50.5 per cent. in 1920. Egyptians in lower posts have also increased from 48.4 per cent. of the total in 1905 to 55 per cent. in 1920. But in the higher posts their number has declined from 27.7 per cent. in 1905 to only 23.1 per cent. in 1920, while in the same category the British share of posts has increased from 42.2 per cent. to 59.3 per cent. of the total.

change in the political status of Egypt. It is rather those occupying genuinely administrative posts, and having authority over large bodies of Egyptians, who are likely to fear this change. Will Egyptian Ministers, they may ask themselves, still support them in the exercise of that authority? Will it still be possible to carry on the perpetual struggle against corruption and nepotism, and for promotion by merit and not by influence, with any measure of success? Such fears are not unnatural, and they may lead some of the men in question to prefer retirement. But there are others who will feel more confidence in themselves and in the essential strength of their future position. For they will not be like the handful of Europeans who, before the occupation, fought an uphill battle for decent administration in an unreformed Egypt, and even under those depressing conditions were not without influence and certainly were not treated with any personal disregard. The British officials who remain in Egypt to-day will be in a country which is permeated by European influences, which has now grown used to British methods of government, and which will remain in contact on its borders with concrete evidences of British power. Moreover, the recognition of Egyptian independence will remove one great obstacle to their present usefulness. The growing prejudice against imported officials, which threatens, if unchecked, to put an end to all hearty co-operation between them and their Egyptian fellows, is not due to the men but to the system. It is because they are, or can be represented to be, imposed upon Egypt against her will, as the agents and symbols of foreign domination, that hostility to them is easily excited. The grounds for such hostility will disappear when they can no longer be regarded as instruments of a foreign government, and their efforts to maintain efficiency will then have an increased amount of native support. For, as individuals, British administrators and the British officers in the Egyptian army are not unpopular. The best of them not only command the respect, but win the affection, of a people who are very quick to recognise capacity, especially when it is combined with graciousness and tact. Given time for reflection—and it is certain that nothing will be done in a hurry—it is likely that these considerations will determine many Englishmen in the Egyptian service to

stick to their posts. And indeed Englishmen could perform no more honourable service than in establishing a friendly partnership between Great Britain and Egypt and assisting Egyptians to make a success of self-governing institutions.

*But while any general or rapid displacement of the British and other foreign officials is not to be anticipated, it is nevertheless* desirable to make careful provision for those with whose services the Egyptian Government may wish to dispense or who may themselves wish to retire when the new system comes into force. Such men must be treated not only with fairness, but with generosity. For nothing could have a worse effect upon Anglo-Egyptian relations in the future than that a number of former officials should be left with a sense of grievance. In any Treaty between Great Britain and Egypt their position will have to be absolutely safeguarded, and the conditions of retirement carefully laid down after consultation with representatives of those concerned. Under the existing law Egyptian officials, who are retired by the Government for reasons other than misconduct, receive pensions on a not ungenerous scale proportionate to their length of service. No new arrangement can infringe existing rights. But it is evidently necessary, in view of the altered circumstances, to make special provision for those whose careers may be prematurely cut short. And it is quite essential that men who under the new system retire of their own accord should receive the same favourable treatment as those with whose services the Egyptian Government may choose to dispense. In ordinary circumstances a man voluntarily resigning a public post before the normal time for his retirement does so at a certain sacrifice. But this principle does not apply where the conditions of service are essentially altered. In that case the official should have the right to choose whether he will or will not go on serving under the new conditions, and if he prefers to retire should be entitled to do so on the same terms as if his retirement had been compulsory.

#### *4. Reservations for the Protection of Foreigners*

To the general principle that the Egyptian Government should in future be free to determine for itself what posts are to be filled by non-Egyptians the memorandum in Article IV.

§§ 3 and 4 makes two exceptions. According to these clauses, a Financial Adviser and an official in the Ministry of Justice, whose special function will be to watch the administration of the law as it affects foreigners, are still to be appointed "in concurrence with His Majesty's Government". It may be asked, in view of what has already been said on this subject, why it was thought necessary to make these exceptions. The answer is to be found in the special responsibilities which under the proposed settlement Great Britain would assume for the protection of foreign rights.

The two points of supreme interest to the foreign Powers whose nationals at present enjoy special privileges under the Capitulations are the solvency of Egypt, which is not only of importance to the bondholders but indirectly affects all foreign capital and enterprise in the country, and the safety of the lives and property of foreigners. To ensure these objects the Powers will certainly continue to insist on the maintenance of some measure of foreign control. They have come to acquiesce in the exercise of that control by Great Britain. But if Great Britain ceased to exercise it, they would demand that some other Power or group of Powers should take her place.

It is, however, a fundamental principle of the contemplated settlement that any powers which may still be necessary to safeguard foreign interests in Egypt and to assure foreign Governments that the rights of their nationals will be respected shall be vested in Great Britain. This is the reason for the stipulation that the two high officials already referred to should continue to be appointed with the concurrence of the British Government—the duty of the one being to ensure solvency, that of the other to watch the administration of the laws as affecting foreigners. The functions of these officials are only described in general terms in the memorandum, and the scope of their authority will have to be very carefully defined in drafting the Treaty. Here again we had to content ourselves with agreement in principle and to leave details to be settled in future negotiations.

The same applies to the clause (IV. § 5) which gives the British representative in Egypt the right, in certain cases, to prevent the application of Egyptian laws to foreigners. This proposal was much discussed. The delegates were very anxious to avoid this right being converted into a general veto on

Egyptian legislation. We, on our side, did not desire this. But the exact limits of the right were difficult to agree upon, and for this reason alternative solutions are suggested in the memorandum. The subject, indeed, is extremely complicated. But, stripped of technicalities, what it all comes to is this. The Egyptian Government is hampered at every turn by its inability to make laws applicable to the subjects of foreign Powers which have capitulatory rights in Egypt without the consent of those Powers, though that consent may in some cases be given on their behalf by the General Assembly of the Mixed Tribunals. As already explained, it has always been the aim of British policy, and it is part of the scheme contemplated in the memorandum, greatly to diminish the restrictions thus imposed on the legislative authority of the Egyptian Government. But it would be practically impossible, and it is not proposed, to remove these restrictions altogether. In so far as they are maintained, somebody must have the right to exercise them. In the scheme embodied in the memorandum it is contemplated that that right, intended as it is to safeguard the legitimate interests of all foreigners, should be conferred by Egypt on a single Power—Great Britain.

#### D.—*The Sudan*

The scheme embodied in the memorandum deals only with Egypt. It has no application to the Sudan, a country entirely distinct from Egypt in its character and constitution, the status of which is not, like that of Egypt, still indeterminate, but has been clearly defined by the Anglo-Egyptian Convention of the 19th January, 1899.<sup>1</sup> For that reason the subject of the Sudan

<sup>1</sup> This Convention, which was signed by the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Lord Cromer, laid it down that Great Britain was "by right of "conquest" entitled "to share in the settlement and future working and development" of the Sudan. By the acceptance of this principle any claim of Turkey to suzerainty over the Sudan was disallowed, and that country was definitely excluded from the area subject to the régime of the Capitulations. It was accordingly provided in the Convention that the jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals should "not extend to or be recognised in any part of the "Sudan", and that no foreign consuls should reside in the country without the consent of the British Government. The supreme military and civil power was to be vested in the person of a "Governor-General", who would be appointed on the recommendation of the British Government by a decree of the Khedive of Egypt, and whose proclamations would have the force of law.



was deliberately excluded from all our discussions with the delegates. This was all along clearly understood by them, but, in order to prevent any misunderstanding in Egypt of the scope of our discussions, Lord Milner, when transmitting the memorandum to Adli Pasha, also handed him the following letter:—

*August 18, 1920.*

“MY DEAR PASHA,

“Referring to our conversation of yesterday, I should like “once more to repeat that no part of the memorandum which I “am now sending you is intended to have any application to the “Sudan. This is, I think, evident on the face of the document, “but, to avoid any possibility of future misunderstanding, it “seems desirable to place on record the view of the Mission that “the subject of the Sudan, which has never been discussed between us and Zaghlul Pasha and his friends, lies quite outside “the scope of the proposed agreement with regard to Egypt. “There is a wide difference of conditions between the two “countries, and in our opinion they must be dealt with on “different lines.

“The Sudan has made great progress under its existing administration, which is based on the provisions of the Convention of 1899, and no change in the political status of Egypt “should be allowed to disturb the further development of the “Sudan on a system which has been productive of such good “results.

“On the other hand, we fully realise the vital interest of “Egypt in the supply of water reaching her through the Sudan, “and we intend to make proposals calculated to remove any “anxiety which Egypt may feel as to the adequacy of that supply “both for her actual and her prospective needs.

(Signed) “MILNER.”

“His Excellency Adli Yeghen Pasha.”

At this point it may be convenient that we should briefly state the reasons which, in our opinion, make it wholly impossible to contemplate, in the case of the Sudan, a settlement on the lines proposed for Egypt, indicating at the same time the general line of policy which appears most suitable to the present requirements of the former country.

While the great majority of the people of Egypt are com-

paratively homogeneous, the Sudan is divided between Arabs and Negroids, and within each of these two great racial groups there are a number of races and tribes differing widely from one another and often mutually antagonistic. The Arabs of the Sudan speak dialects of the same language as the people of Egypt and are united to them by the bond of religion. Islam, moreover, is spreading even among the non-Arab races of the Sudan. These influences mitigate in various degrees, but they have not overcome, the antagonism of the two countries, which rankling memories of Egyptian misgovernment in the past have done much to intensify.

The political bonds which have at intervals in the past united Egypt with the Sudan have always been fragile. Egyptian conquerors have at various times overrun parts and even the whole of the Sudan. But it has never been really subdued by, or in any sense amalgamated with, Egypt. The Egyptian conquest of the Sudan in the last century was especially disastrous to both countries, and ended in the complete overthrow of Egyptian authority in the early eighties by the Mahdist rebellion. For more than ten years no vestige of Egyptian authority was left in the Sudan except in a small district surrounding Suakin. As a consequence of this breakdown, Great Britain was obliged to undertake several costly expeditions for the rescue of the Egyptian garrisons and the defence of Egypt, which was in danger of being overrun by the Mahdist hordes.

Since the conquest of the country by British and Egyptian forces under British leadership in 1896-8, the Government of the Sudan, which under the Convention of 1899 takes the form of an Anglo-Egyptian Protectorate, has been virtually in British hands. The Governor-General, though appointed by the Sultan (formerly the Khedive) of Egypt, is nominated by the British Government, and all the Governors of Provinces and principal officials are British. Under this system of government the progress of the Sudan in all respects, material and moral, has been remarkable. When full allowance is made for the simplicity of the problem, viz., the introduction of the first principles of orderly and civilised government among a very primitive people, the great success actually achieved during the long Governor-Generalship of Sir R. Wingate is one of the brightest

pages in the history of British rule over backward races. The present administration is popular in the Sudan and, with few exceptions, peaceful and progressive conditions prevail throughout the country.

But while Egypt and the Sudan are essentially distinct countries, and are bound to develop on very different lines, Egypt will always have one interest of supreme importance in the Sudan. The Nile, upon which the very existence of Egypt depends, flows for hundreds of miles through the Sudan, and it is vital to Egypt to prevent any such diversion of water from the Nile as might diminish her present cultivable area or preclude the reclamation of that portion of her soil, some 2,000,000 acres in extent, which is capable of being brought under cultivation when, by means of storage, the present supply of water available for irrigation has been increased. Hitherto the amount of water drawn from the Nile in its passage through the Sudan has been of negligible amount, but as the population of the Sudan increases that country will require more water for its own development, and a conflict of interest between it and Egypt might arise. At the same time there is every reason to hope that, properly conserved and distributed, the Nile waters will suffice for all the lands, whether in Egypt or the Sudan, which are ever likely to require irrigation. The control of the waters of the Nile for purposes of irrigation is a matter of such paramount importance and the technical and other problems involved are so difficult and intricate that it is, in our opinion, necessary to set up a permanent Commission, composed on the one hand of experts of the highest authority and on the other hand of representatives of all the countries affected—Egypt, the Sudan, and Uganda—to settle all questions affecting the regulation of the river and to ensure the fair distribution of the water.

The contiguity of Egypt and the Sudan and their common interest in the Nile make it desirable that some political nexus between the two countries should always be maintained, but it is out of the question that this connection should take the form of the subjection of the Sudan to Egypt. The former country is capable of and entitled to independent development in accordance with its own character and requirements. It is

much too early to attempt to determine its ultimate political status. For present purposes that status is sufficiently defined by the Convention of 1899 between Great Britain and Egypt, which provides for the necessary political connection between Egypt and the Sudan without hampering the independent development of the latter country.

Though it is absolutely necessary for the present to maintain a single supreme authority over the whole of the Sudan, it is not desirable that the government of that country should be highly centralised. Having regard to its vast extent and the varied character of its inhabitants, the administration of its different parts should be left, as far as possible, in the hands of the native authorities, wherever they exist, under British supervision. A centralised bureaucracy is wholly unsuitable for the Sudan. Decentralisation and the employment, wherever possible, of native agencies for the simple administrative needs of the country, in its present stage of development, would make both for economy and efficiency. At the present time the officials of local origin are still largely outnumbered by those introduced from Egypt, with whom service in the Sudan is by no means popular. This difficulty will be overcome as education progresses and a greater number of Sudanese themselves become capable of filling official posts. At the same time care should be taken, in the matter of education, not to repeat the mistake which has been made in Egypt of introducing a system which fits pupils for little else than employment in clerical and minor administrative posts, and creates an overgrown body of aspirants to Government employment. There is no room in the Sudan for a host of petty officials, and education should be directed to giving the Sudanese a capacity and a taste for employment in other directions, such as agriculture, industry, commerce, and engineering. The immediate need of the country is material development, and it can do without an elaborate administrative system.

The military forces still employed in the Sudan are very large. A large army was, no doubt, required to complete the conquest and pacification of the country, but the time has come when, in our opinion, the question of the number and organisation of its military forces should be reconsidered, and the financial

burden upon Egypt which the maintenance of that force involves be reduced. Hitherto, the Governor-Generalship of the Sudan and the Command-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army have been united in one person. There were good reasons for this in the past, but it is indefensible as a permanent arrangement. At the first convenient opportunity a civil Governor-General should be appointed.

In general it should be the aim of British policy to relieve Egypt from any financial responsibility for the Sudan and to establish the relations of the two countries for the future upon a basis which will secure the independent development of the Sudan while safeguarding the vital interests of Egypt in the waters of the Nile.

Egypt has an indefeasible right to an ample and assured supply of water for the land at present under cultivation and to a fair share of any increased supply which engineering skill may be able to provide. A formal declaration on the part of Great Britain that she recognises this right and is resolved under all circumstances to uphold it would go far to allay the uneasiness which prevails in Egypt on this subject. We are of opinion that such a declaration might with advantage be made at the present time.

# APPENDIX B

PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY BRITISH IN THE VARIOUS ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE A TREATY WITH EGYPT

## I. BRITISH TROOPS

| 1921   | 1924   | 1927  | 1930   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><i>Lord Curzon</i></p> <p>The objects for which the maintenance of British forces in Egypt is required are, as viewed by His Majesty's Government, four in number and may be thus roughly defined:</p> <p>(1) The protection both in peace and war of the imperial lines of communication.</p> <p>(2) Assistance to the Egyptian Government, when required, for the defence of the integrity of Egyptian territory against external attack.</p> <p>(3) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt, as provided for in the new treaty.</p> <p>(4) Assistance to the Egyptian Government, when required, for the suppression of grave disorder or the defence of public security.</p> | <p><i>Mr. MacDonald</i></p> <p>His Majesty's Government will, as in the past, assist the Egyptian Government against aggression.</p> <p>The Egyptian Government will afford the British Government in Egyptian territory at times of strained relations or in case of war, even though the integrity of Egypt may not be menaced, all the facilities and assistance which one ally may properly afford another during a war in which both are engaged.</p> <p>In order to facilitate Anglo-Egyptian co-operation at all times, and particularly in <i>casu foederis</i>, the Egyptian Government will act in consultation and in agreement with His Majesty's Government for the purpose of:</p> | <p><i>Sir Austen Chamberlain</i></p> <p>In order to facilitate and secure to His Britannic Majesty the protection of the lines of communication of the British Empire and pending the conclusion at some future date of an agreement by which His Britannic Majesty entrusts His Majesty the King of Egypt with the task of ensuring this protection His Majesty the King of Egypt authorises His Britannic Majesty to maintain upon Egyptian territory such armed forces as His Britannic Majesty's Government consider necessary for this purpose. The presence of these forces shall not constitute in any manner an occupation and will in no way prejudice the sovereign rights of Egypt.</p> <p>After a period of ten years</p> | <p><i>Mr. Henderson</i></p> <p>The military occupation of Egypt by the forces of His Britannic Majesty is terminated.</p> <p>In view of the fact that the Suez Canal, while being an integral part of Egypt, is a universal means of communication, as also an essential means of communication, between the different parts of the British Empire, His Majesty the King of Egypt, until such time as the high contracting parties agree that the Egyptian Army is in a position to ensure by its own resources the liberty and entire security of navigation of the Canal, authorises His Britannic Majesty to station near Ismailia, in the zone specified in the attached note, such forces as do not exceed the number therein</p> |

## I. BRITISH TROOPS—(continued)

| 1921  | 1924  | 1927   | 1930   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Lord Curzon</i></p> <p>For the discharge of this obligation it is proposed that the British forces shall have free passage through Egypt and shall be maintained at such places in Egypt and for such periods as may from time to time be determined. They shall also at all times have facilities for the acquisition of barracks, exercise grounds, aerodromes, and naval yards and for the free use of naval harbours.</p> | <p><i>Mr MacDonald</i></p> <p>(c) Leasing to His Majesty's Government, in consideration of an annual payment of £ the territory situated between the Suez Canal and the southwestern frontier of Palestine and comprising the whole of the Sinai Peninsula.</p> <p>In order that the independence of Egypt may not be impaired, His Majesty's Government agree that, except in the circumstances and for the purposes defined above, no British forces or military establishments shall be maintained on Egyptian territory other than that defined in (c) above.</p> <p>The evacuation of the British forces stationed in Cairo to be completed in two years, and at Alexandria in four years.</p> | <p><i>Sir Austen Chamberlain</i></p> <p>from the coming into force of the present treaty the high contracting parties will reconsider, in the light of their experience of the operation of the provisions of the present treaty, the question of the localities in which the said forces are to be stationed. Should no agreement be reached on this point, the question may be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. Should the decision of the League of Nations be adverse to the claims of the Egyptian Government, the question can, at their request and under the same conditions, be reinvestigated at intervals of five years from the date of the League's decision.</p> | <p><i>Mr. Henderson</i></p> <p>agreed upon, with a view to ensuring in co-operation with the Egyptian forces the defence of the Canal; for the same purpose the Royal Air Force Depot will be transferred from Abukir to Port Fuad.</p> <p>The presence of these forces shall not constitute in any manner an occupation and will in no way prejudice the sovereign rights of Egypt. It is understood that at the end of the period specified in Article 14 the question whether the presence of British forces is no longer necessary owing to the fact that the Egyptian army is in a position to ensure by its own resources the liberty and entire security of navigation on the Canal may, if there has been any difference between the high contracting parties, be submitted for settlement to the League of Nations.</p> |

| 1921   | 1924  | 1927   | 1930  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Lord Curzon</i></p> <p>The peaceful development of the Sudan being essential to the security of Egypt and for the maintenance of her water supply, Egypt undertakes to continue to afford the Sudan Government the same military assistance as in the past, or, in lieu thereof, to provide the Sudan Government with financial assistance to an extent agreed upon between the two governments.</p> <p>All Egyptian forces in the Sudan shall be under the orders of the Governor-General.</p> <p>Great Britain further undertakes to secure for Egypt her fair share of the waters of the Nile, and to this end it is agreed that no new irrigation works on the Nile or its tributaries south of Wadi Halfa shall be undertaken without the concurrence of a board of three conservators, representing Egypt, the Sudan, and Uganda respectively.</p> | <p><i>Mr. MacDonald</i></p> <p>The high contracting parties agree that the interests of the inhabitants of the Sudan and the eventual independence of that country will best be promoted by the continuance of the régime as hitherto established in virtue of the Anglo-Egyptian Convention of 1899, and the stipulations of that instrument will accordingly be reviewed on the expiration of twenty-five years from the coming into force of the treaty.</p> <p>The high contracting parties agree that the defence of the Sudan shall henceforth be entrusted to a locally recruited defence force under the command of the Governor-General, supplemented by one British and one Egyptian battalion and one British and one Egyptian battery of artillery. They further agree to invite the Council of the League of Nations to determine:</p> <p>(a) The manner in which Egyptian interests in the waters of the Nile shall be safeguarded.</p> <p>(b) The amount which the Sudan shall in reason and equity be deemed to owe to Egypt and the manner in which the debt as fixed should be funded and repaid.</p> | <p><i>Sir Austen Chamberlain</i></p> <p>The subject of the Sudan is not referred to either in the preamble or in any of the clauses of the draft treaty discussed between Sir A. Chamberlain and Sarwat Pasha.</p> <p>The omission was due to the difficulties surrounding the subject. These were early in the discussion found to be so great that it was decided to defer negotiation upon them until a later date.</p> | <p><i>Mr. Henderson</i></p> <p>In the British draft the question of the future of the Sudan was reserved for subsequent discussion as in 1927. The Egyptian delegation, however, under Nahas Pasha made demands in regard to the Sudan, which amounted to a return to the <i>status quo ante</i> 1924, with the right reserved to Egypt of reopening within a year and without any restrictions, negotiations as to the Sudan's future. It was upon this question of the Sudan that negotiations broke down, in spite of the immense concessions, in this and other respects, made by the British Government.</p> |



## III. PROTECTION OF FOREIGN INTERESTS

| 1921  | 1924   | 1927  | 1930   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><i>Lord Curzon</i></p> <p>The Egyptian Government will appoint, in consultation with His Majesty's Government, a Judicial Commissioner who, in virtue of the obligations assumed by Great Britain, shall be charged with the duty of watching the administration of the law in all matters affecting foreigners.</p> <p>For the proper discharge of his duties the Judicial Commissioner shall be kept fully informed on all matters affecting foreigners which concern the Ministers of Justice and of the Interior, and shall at all times enjoy the right of access to the Egyptian Ministers of Justice and of the Interior.</p> <p>A special bureau shall be set up in the department of Public Security in the Ministry of the Interior under the direction of a European official to report to the Minister on matters of police administration affecting foreigners.</p> <p>The command of the police forces in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said shall continue to be entrusted to European officers with a sufficient staff to ensure efficiency.</p> <p>European legal advisers to be</p> | <p><i>Mr. MacDonald</i></p> <p>Jusqu'à ce qu'un accord soit intervenu entre les deux gouvernements au sujet de la protection des intérêts étrangers en Égypte, le gouvernement égyptien maintiendra les postes de Conseiller financier et de Conseiller judiciaire et respectera leurs pouvoirs et privilèges tels qu'ils étaient prévus lors de l'abolition du protectorat; il respectera également le statut et les attributions actuelles du Bureau européen du Ministère de l'Intérieur ainsi qu'elles ont été déjà définies par arrêté ministériel et il tiendra dûment compte des recommandations que pourra faire le Directeur général relativement aux matières de sa compétence.</p> <p><i>N.B.</i>—The above is the text of the ultimatum presented to Zaghlul Pasha after the murder of Sir Lee Stack. The subject of the protection of foreign interests was not touched upon in the abortive treaty discussions which took place between Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Zaghlul Pasha earlier in the same year.</p> | <p><i>Sir Austen Chamberlain</i></p> <p>His Britannic Majesty undertakes to use all his influence with the Powers possessing capitulatory rights in Egypt to obtain the modification of the capitulatory régime now existing in Egypt so as to make it conform more closely with the spirit of the times and with the present state of Egypt.</p> <p>The Egyptian Government, in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government, will appoint a financial adviser. When it shall be so desired, the powers at present exercised by the Commissioners of the Debt shall be conferred upon him. He will be kept informed of all legislative proposals of such a nature that they would require in present circumstances the consent of the capitulatory powers. He shall be at the disposal of the Egyptian Government for all other matters in regard to which they may wish to consult him.</p> <p>Having regard to future changes in the judicial organisation as envisaged in Article 9 of the treaty (para. 1 above), the Egyptian Government will name in agreement with His Majesty's Government a judicial</p> | <p><i>Mr. Henderson</i></p> <p>His Britannic Majesty recognises that the responsibility of the lives and property of foreigners in Egypt devolves exclusively upon the Egyptian Government, who will ensure the fulfilment of their obligations in this respect.</p> <p>His Britannic Majesty recognises that the capitulatory régime now existing in Egypt is no longer in accordance with the spirit of the times and with the present state of Egypt. His Britannic Majesty accordingly undertakes to use all his influence with the Powers possessing capitulatory rights in Egypt to obtain, in conditions which will safeguard the legitimate interests of foreigners, the transfer to the Mixed Tribunals of the jurisdiction of the existing Consular Courts, and the application of Egyptian legislation to foreigners.</p> |

1921

*Lord Curzon*

appointed in the Ministries of Justice and of the Interior to collaborate in the preparation of all laws or regulations affecting foreigners.

The Egyptian Government agree that the British Commissioner of the debt shall at all times enjoy the right of access to the President of the Council of Ministers and to the Minister of Finance and shall be entitled to receive information on any matter within the purview of the Ministry of Finance, especially to satisfy himself that the charges for the Mixed Courts, pensions payable to retired foreign officials, and the service of the Unconsolidated Debt and the loans charged on the Ottoman Tribute are being punctually paid.

1927

*Sir Austen Chamberlain*

advised. He shall be kept informed of all matters concerning the administration of justice in which foreigners are concerned, and will be at the disposal of the Egyptian Government for all other matters in regard to which they may wish to consult him.

Until the coming into force, as the result of agreements between Egypt and the Powers concerned of the reform of the capitulatory system contemplated in Art. 9, the Egyptian Government will not modify, except in agreement with His Majesty's Government, the number, status, and functions of the British officials engaged at the moment in the public security and police services.

NORGE.—The four points called "reserved points", which by the Declaration of 1922 had been "absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until such time as it may be possible by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Egypt", were as follows:

- (a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt.
- (b) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference direct or indirect.
- (c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities.
- (d) The Sudan.

It was added that "pending the conclusion of such agreements the *status quo* in all these matters shall remain intact". The first two points were dealt with in the various attempts at negotiation, under the provisions relating to British troops in Egypt and to the Egyptian Army. From the third the protection of minorities was tacitly but completely dropped in all discussions with Egypt. The fourth point—the Sudan—formed, together with the question of British troops in Egypt, the obstacle past which the negotiations never succeeded in moving. The negotiations of 1927 attempted to solve this difficult problem by the convenient method of making no reference to it, direct or indirect. This method served to postpone failure, but not to mitigate it when at last

## APPENDIX C

### CORRESPONDENCE ON THE ARMY QUESTION

*Lord Lloyd to Sarwat Pasha*

*29th May 1927*

1. I HAVE the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Government to invite your Excellency to examine question of Egyptian Army in the light of the following considerations: Great Britain is always looking forward to a friendly settlement with Egypt of various points outstanding between our two countries.

2. In any such settlement it is clear to His Majesty's Government that Egypt must assist Great Britain in preservation of Egypt from foreign aggression and in protection of British Imperial communications.

3. His Majesty's Government earnestly desire that an efficient Egyptian army should be ready to take part in the country's defence, and are prepared to give Egypt every assistance in creation of such a force subject to condition that as it will be called upon to co-operate with British troops in Egypt it must be trained on British lines; that is to say by minimum of British personnel that may be found necessary.

4. Lately a definite and disquieting tendency to introduce political influence with Egyptian Army has been noticeable.

5. This tendency has manifested itself in a number of ways to which I have repeatedly called your Excellency's attention as I did that of your predecessor.

6. The fact that my representations on the subject have hitherto been informal and verbal has, I need not remind your Excellency, been due solely to anxiety of His Majesty's Govern-

ment even where their responsibilities are in danger of being directly involved, to intervene as little as possible in Egyptian affairs.

7. The tendency, however, referred to above, which has, it is relevant to observe, proved the ruin of many armies in the past elsewhere, has latterly been accompanied by determined efforts to diminish the functions and authority of the present Inspector-General and of the few British officers serving in the various departments which fall under Ministry of War. These efforts have lately found support in part in recommendations of Parliamentary War Committee recently published and shortly to be discussed in Parliament.

8. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the approval of such recommendations could not but gravely detract from chances of a friendly settlement of this important question between Egypt and Great Britain; and sincerely anxious to lay foundations of a solution satisfactory to both countries His Majesty's Government invite Egyptian Government to review their position without further delay.

9. For the sake of reaching a friendly agreement and in deference to legitimate Egyptian susceptibilities, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to acquiesce in two proposals to which she had previously found it her duty to take exception; firstly, that to reduce military service from five to three years, although this project has as its declared object augmentation of the country's trained reserve; secondly, that to raise nine battalions from lower to higher establishment, an immediate increase in effective rifle strength of Egypt of more than 1600 men. The assistance which His Majesty's Government is lending to Egypt in formation of an air force is already within your Excellency's knowledge and would be continued and as far as possible expedited.

10. Egypt will realise that friendship prompts these concessions. His Majesty's Government would for their part require:

- a. That Inspector-General of Egyptian Army should be able freely and properly to discharge his functions as delegated to him by Huddleston Pasha in January 1925 and never abrogated; that he should for the purpose be given the rank of Ferik with pay proportionate to his

- duties; and that he should be given a contract at least of three years in the first instance.
- b. That Minister of War, if Officers' Committee is retained in its existing form, should not arrest passage to His Majesty the King of Egypt of recommendations of that Committee in respect of appointments, promotions, decorations and matters of discipline generally.
  - c. That a senior British officer of rank of Lewa should be nominated to serve as second-in-command to Inspector-General and to replace him in his absence. This officer would normally discharge duties inherent in the Inspector-General proper (the Inspector-General having full employment in senior duties originally assigned to him by Huddleston Pasha) and be replaced in his absence or when acting for Inspector-General by next senior British officer available.
  - d. That frontier administration (and coastguard service also if effect is given to amalgamation recently decided upon) should be placed under British Inspector-General, and, in his absence, of his deputy; or in alternative that Director-General of this administration should be a British officer as was the case until April 1925.
  - e. That few posts in departments falling under Minister of War (including coastguard service if amalgamated with frontier administration) at present held by British officers or men should be retained in British hands so long as this *modus vivendi* remains in force, it being understood that functions of such British personnel should be neither directly nor indirectly impaired.
  - f. That in respect of jurisdiction this *status quo* in the areas for which frontier administration is responsible should remain intact.

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*Sarwat Pasha to Lord Lloyd*

*3rd June 1927*

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Egyptian Government have taken cognisance of the communication that you were kind enough to address to me on 29th May

in accordance with the instructions of His Majesty's Government. The Egyptian Government thank His Majesty's Government for cordial tone of this communication and for the friendly assurance contained in it. If His Britannic Majesty's Government envisage a friendly settlement of these questions still outstanding between the two countries, the Egyptian Government for their part desire nothing better than to see approach of day on which a pact of alliance shall be concluded between Great Britain and Egypt, a pact which will mark opening of an era of co-operation fruitful in result and in mutual profit.

His Britannic Majesty's Government, envisaging eventual co-operation between the two countries for assurance of realisation of objects which will be assigned to them in contemplated agreement, propose to Egyptian Government initiation of negotiations with a view to arrangements calculated to facilitate this co-operation.

They express at the same time anxiety in respect of a tendency which they appear to have observed to introduce political influences into the Army and of efforts designed, in their view, to diminish authority of British officers, and, they state, partially consecrated by recent public recommendations of Parliamentary War Commission—a tendency and efforts which His Britannic Majesty's Government consider as extremely prejudicial to chances of friendly agreement between the two countries.

Egyptian Government are glad to state that they entirely share your Excellency's point of view in regard to danger of introducing politics into armies.

Moreover, they have always been, and will always be, profoundly anxious to eliminate such a possibility in respect of Egyptian army. They would not have failed to institute enquiries if definite facts had been brought to their notice.

Without wishing to discuss reasons which prompted report to which your Excellency's communication alludes, I feel it my duty to draw attention to fact that this report is in no sense the work of Parliamentary War Council. A sub-Commission formed within it to examine decree of 1925 instituting War Council and Officers' Committee charged two of its members with the task of elaborating a report on the question. It is this

draft report which has been published without having been ever submitted either to War Commission or to Sub-Committee itself.

Egyptian Government are disposed to accord most favourable reception to proposal tending to establish by negotiation arrangements calculated to facilitate co-operation of which mention has been made. But, while awaiting opportune moment at which these negotiations can be undertaken, Egyptian Government consider that, until these arrangements have been adopted, situation, as far as it concerns exercise of attributes in Egyptian Army as it has hitherto existed, could be maintained without inconvenience. In fact, since promulgation of above-mentioned decree of 1925 admitting Inspector-General to membership of Army Council and Officers' Committee, the different army services have been functioning normally. Though certain differences of opinion have arisen concerning recommendations of Officers' Committee, they have only been rare and incidental; they arise more or less out of transitory period. But it may be considered that in the interests of discipline and good organization Minister will adopt, generally, views of committee formed to help him to fulfil his responsibilities and from which he obtains grounds for his decisions.

With regard to extension from two to three years of term of service of Inspector-General, Government consider that, as contract of Inspector-General has hardly started to run, question, which is of purely personal nature, is of no immediate interest. The same may be said of proposal to confer on him rank of Ferik and to increase his salary. On the other hand, Minister of War will examine question of appointment of a senior British officer to help Inspector-General in exercise of his duties or to replace him in his absence, and in so far as needs of service require it, will not, in virtue of his discretionary power to nominate a foreigner to a technical post, fail to give effect to this appointment. This officer would, in case of need, be replaced during his absence or while he himself is replacing Inspector-General by the most senior British officer.

As regards frontier administration, I venture to draw your Excellency's attention to fact that this administration, which deals only with questions of purely internal administration and

of contraband, was attached to Ministry of War by decree of 5th October, 1922. By decree of 1925 instituting Army Council the Director-General of this administration is an ex officio member of said council. Furthermore, since matters touching on defence of country fall within competence of Army Council, there is every reason to feel sure that those affairs of Frontier Administration relating to military questions will be despatched with every desirable safeguard and in accordance with service requirements.

Moreover, British officers holding posts in above administration have profited by advantages of Law 28 of 1923. Council of ministers had last January to consider question of these officials at time of expiry of contracts. It decided, in the interests of the service, to retain them in their posts. New contracts were granted to them for periods varying from one to two years, and these contracts have maintained them in duties which they were then carrying out, and which they still continue to discharge. It will only be at expiration of these contracts that question of whether these officers should be maintained in their positions will fall to be examined. In examining this question, Egyptian Government will of course be governed only by interest of service to the exclusion of any other consideration whatever.

Judicial organization in force in districts falling under authority of Frontier Administration is in reality no more than an extension to all such districts of principles already established in 1911 by Egyptian Government in Sinai districts before it was attached to that administration. The 1922 decree maintained this organization until such time as it could be replaced by one more appropriate. Since that time Egyptian Government has had no cause to consider the question of the establishment of the new organization; nevertheless, for reasons connected with special conditions and degree of development of El Arish region, which belongs to eastern frontier district, Government has been studying question of re-establishing with its original district of competence the first instance court, which existed at El Arish before creation of administration in question.

In conclusion, Egyptian Government is confident that above



assurances and explanations will dispel any misunderstanding between the two Governments on the subject of the state of Egyptian army. I am glad to add that Egyptian Government's most sincere desire is that friendly relations between the two countries may be strengthened day by day, that good understanding between them may be maintained and harmoniously developed and that success may crown mutual efforts tending to conclusion of an agreement which, while strengthening bonds of friendship uniting the two countries, shall safeguard their interest.

I avail, etc.

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*Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain*

CAIRO, 12th June 1927

. . . This draft makes a very great advance from our point of view:—

- (a) It states in much clearer and more fluent language motives which dictated the first note, and gives effective and binding value to the somewhat timid and half-hearted acceptance which characterised the latter.
- (b) It states definitely that functions of the Sirdar as delegated by Huddleston Pasha in 1925 have been found in no way to conflict with the existing state of things; and that Egyptian Governments are therefore ready to maintain those functions unimpaired as attributes of Inspector-General.
- (c) As regards Inspector-General's deputy, it says clearly that Egyptian Government, now being convinced of the need for this appointment, have decided to make it without delay.
- (d) It requests that recommendations of Officers' Committee shall, save for very exceptional reasons, be submitted by Minister of War to the King as they stand.
- (e) With reference to Frontier Administration, it is strong in assurances that Egyptian Government will in respect of both civil and judicial matters pay immediate

attention to questions affecting defence of the country and any other objects which it may prove important to assure.

Prime Minister, in giving me this draft, gave me the following supplementary assurances in the most formal and categorical fashion, Minister of War and a member of my staff being present:—

- (a) That Inspector-General should be given the rank and pay of Ferik within a week.
- (b) That his deputy should be appointed within a week of our submission of his name.
- (c) That second post in the Frontier Administration vacant owing to recent death of Egyptian occupant should be filled by present British subdirector-general of coast guards on amalgamation of the two departments, already overdue. . . .



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